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GENTLEWOMEN AIM TO PLEASE

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Edited from Victorian Manuels of Etiquette by

JERRARD TICKELL

NICOLAS BENTLEY

drew the pictures

LONDON

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For Margaret Rawlings, Gentlewoman, whose art and whose conversation are graceful, varied and sparkling; and for H—— G——, Gentleman, whose manners and whose apparel are above reproach.

INTRODUCTION

I HAPPENED on a torn copy of a Victorian etiquette book in the Faringdon Book Mart, price 1*d.* I read it through one sleepless night and it occurred to me that although it contained nothing intentionally calculated " to bring a smile to the young or a blush to the fair," it was nevertheless extremely amusing. I rang up my friend Nicolas Bentley and asked if he would " do the drawings " were I to collect a number of these manuals and attempt to squeeze their essence into one volume. He said he was too busy. I asked him to read my manuscript. He promised to do so but reiterated his inability to take on any more work. Nevertheless " Nicolas Bentley drew the pictures."

Victorian Manuals of Etiquette appear to fulfil three functions ; to instruct, to amuse and to combine amusement with instruction. They fulfil the first for the uninformed, the second for the sophisticated and the third for those who are not quite sure. You who read this are, of course, in category number two but, if any doubt should arise as to the propriety of wearing enamel boots or of offering a still warm chair to a gentlewoman, the appropriate section is at your service.

J. T.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction vii

I

ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEWOMEN

1. *How to Introduce Persons—A Note on "Intimate" Handshaking* 3
2. *Letters of Introduction—The "Punctilios" of Politeness —How not to be a Parvenu or Boor* . . . 4
3. *What to do with Umbrellas, Dogs, and Children* . 5
4. *Conversation—The "Saucy Chique" of Americanisms —How not to be a Lady Punster* . . . 8
5. *Invitations—Dainty Notepaper—Tradesmen* . . 11
6. *The Promenade—with a Note on Behaviour in the Park* 13
7. *Dress—What Gentlewomen should and must not Wear— Note on Corsages, Boots, and Personal Cleanliness* 14
8. *Parties—Sacred and Comic Songs—Charades—How to lose at Cards* 20
9. *Dinner—Pleasant Intercourse—How to Eat—Knives, &c.—Overfilled Plates—How to eject things from your Mouth—Drink* 25
10. *The Ballroom from the Feminine Point of View* . 32
11. *A General Summing-up* 38

II

ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEMEN

PAGE

1. *Conversation — Be Fairly Deep — Gentlewomen not Triflers* 45
2. *The Promenade—Avoid giving Gentlewomen the Fatigue of looking up to your Level* 46
3. *Dress—Handsome Waistcoats—Turquoise Pins—Caps* 48
4. *How to mount a Lady* 53
5. *Parties—Your Nose not a Trombone—Never offer a Still Warm Chair to a Gentlewoman—The Dangers of "Consequences"* 55
6. *The Ballroom from the Feminine Point of View* . 58
7. *Good Manners as a Whole* 59

III

BALLS

1. *Gentlemen's Wear, comprising Enamel Boots and Costly Trifles* 63
2. *Balls—A Few Notes—How to avoid Disagreeable Scenes* 64
3. *The Quadrille—A Dance of Ease and Propriety* . 65
4. *The Polka—Perform with Spirit—Methods of clasping Gentlewomen* 66
5. *The Valse—Whirling—Dangers of Collision—Avoid Tall Gentlewomen* 70
6. *The Cotillon—Jolly Floral Romps—Merry Groups—A Coquettish Dance* 72
7. *Sir Roger de Coverley—Rustic Strains* 76
8. *Notice* 76

IV

COURTSHIP AND MATRIMONY

PAGE

1. *First Steps in Courtship—"The Inly Touch of Love," Some Serious Advice—Yielding to Alluring Influences —Timid Girls should tell their Mothers—"The Half-dropped Eye"* 81

2. *The Mischief of Unchecked Intercourse and Incautious Familiarity* 89

3. *What Gentlewomen should watch out for during Courtship* 91

4. *What Gentlemen should watch out for—Abridged List of Gentlewomen's Vices* 92

5. *How to accept Presents—Avoid Impropriety* . . 94

6. *The Proposal—Unloosening of the Floodgates—Prudery and Coquetry* 96

7. *Refusal by the Young Lady* 99

8. *Conduct of the Gentleman when his Addresses are Rejected —The Use of Keen-edged but Courteous Ridicule* . 101

9. *Conduct of the Engaged Couple—Gallant and Affectionate Assiduity on the part of the Gentleman—Delicacy, Tenderness, and Confidence on Hers—Minute and Special Attentions—Indecorous Familiarity—Injudicious "Pliant Wax"—"His Reasonable Wishes"* 103

10. *Conduct of the Lady during her Betrothal—Note on Unseemly Display of "Her Charms"—the Happy Moment* 106

11. *Conduct of the Gentleman towards the Family of his Betrothed—Embarrassing Results* 108

PAGE

12. *Conduct of the Lady retiring from her Engagement—Incompatible Habits and Ungentlemanly Actions—Venial Cases* 109

13. *Conduct of the Gentleman on retiring from his Engagement—Painful Feelings* 110

14. *Demeanour of the Suitor during Courtship—Self-denial—No Stint—What to wear and when* . . . 113

15. *Should a Courtship be Short or Long?—Freshness Wears Off—Lukewarmness—How to make Long Engagements agreeable to the Gentleman and endurable to the Gentlewoman* 115

16. *How to be Married—The Avoidance of Suddenness—A Warning* 117

17. *The Bridal Trousseau and the Duty of the Bridegroom—Burning Correspondence—Severing Bachelor Connections—The Ring—Bridesmaids—Their Proper Mating with Bridegroomsmen* 119

18. *The Wedding Day—Her Costume and His—The Words "I Will" and "Honour and Obey"—The Ring—Palpable Carelessness on the Bridegroom's Part—After the Ceremony—Wedding Favours—Wedding Breakfast* 123

19. *The Honeymoon—A Few Gentle Tears—A Short Cough* 131

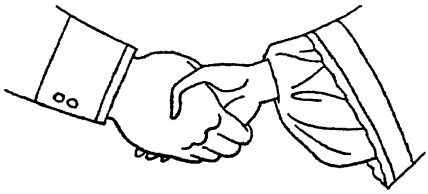
20. *Etiquette after the Wedding—Practical Advice to a Newly-married Couple—No Concealments—Little Love—Begotten Attentions* 133

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
L'enfant terrible	7
Religious doubts	10
Attention aux trains	16
Con passione	22
" *Is the pudd good?* "	30
A pleasant combination	34
With the compliments of the author	40
What the well-dressed Frenchman will wear	50
" *Shall we join the ladies?* "	57
" *You should see me dance the Polka!* "	67
Offside!	75
The most powerful of Human Passions	82
" *Win her with gifts if she respects not words* "	87
Let no favourable opportunity slip	97
Jealousy versus *demeanour*	105
Thrice noble is the man who of himself is king	114
" *Why am I always the bridesmaid?* *And never the blushing bride* "	121
The missing link	126
" *A-hem!* "	132

I

ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEWOMEN



1

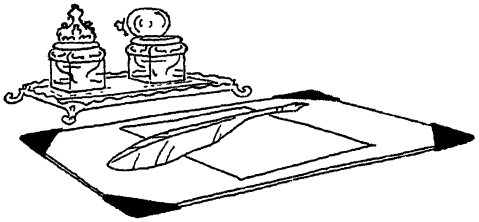
How to Introduce Persons—A Note on "Intimate" Handshaking

To introduce persons who are mutually unknown is to undertake a serious responsibility.

Always introduce the gentleman to the lady—never the lady to the gentleman. The chivalry of etiquette assumes that the lady is invariably the superior in right of her sex, and that the gentleman is honoured in the introduction. This rule is to be observed even when the social rank of the gentleman is higher than that of the lady.

When you are introduced to a gentleman, never offer your hand. When introduced, persons limit their recognition of each other to a bow. On the Continent, ladies never shake hands with gentlemen unless under circumstances of great intimacy.

A sister may present her brother, or a mother her son, without any kind of preliminary; but only when there is no inferiority on the part of her own family to that of the acquaintance.



2

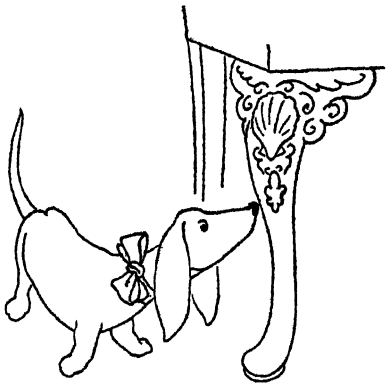
Letters of Introduction—The "Punctilios" of Politeness—How not to be a Parvenu or Boor

Let your note-paper be of the best quality and the proper size. Albert or Queen's size is the best for these purposes.

It has been well said that "attention to the punctilios of politeness is a proof at once of self-respect, and of respect for your friend". Though irksome at first, these trifles soon cease to be matters for memory, and become things of mere habit. To the thoroughly well-bred they are things of second nature. Let no one neglect them who is desirous of pleasing in society; and above all, let no one

deem them unworthy of attention. They are precisely the trifles which do most to make social intercourse agreeable, and a knowledge of which distinguishes the gentlewoman from the parvenu, and the gentleman from the boor.

A good memory for these trifles is one of the hall-marks of good breeding.



3

What to do with Umbrellas, Dogs, and Children

Umbrellas should invariably be left in the hall.

Never take favourite dogs into a drawing-room when you make a morning call. Their feet may be dusty, or they may bark at the sight of strangers or, being of too friendly a disposition, may take the

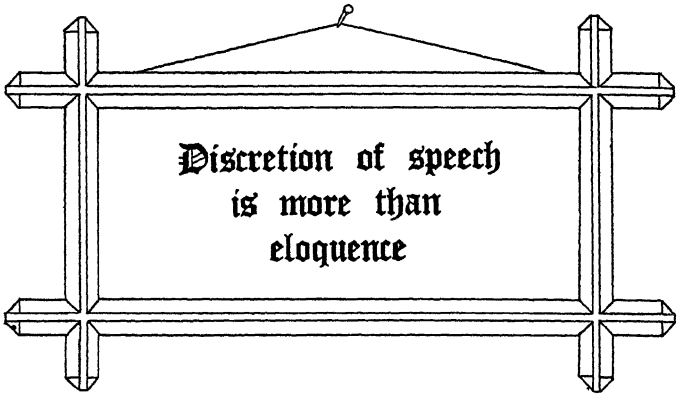
liberty of lying on a lady's gown, or jumping on the sofas or easy chairs. Where your friend has a favourite cat already established before the fire, a battle may ensue, and one or other of the pets be seriously hurt. Besides, many persons have a constitutional antipathy to dogs, and others never allow their own to be seen in the sitting-rooms. A visitor has no right to inflict upon her friend the society of her dog as well as of herself. Neither is it well for a mother to take young children with her when she pays morning visits; their presence, unless they are unusually well trained, can only be productive of anxiety to both yourself and your hostess. She, while striving to amuse them, or to appear interested in them, is secretly anxious for the fate of her album, or the ornaments on her *étagère*; while the mother is trembling lest her children should say or do something objectionable.

If you have occasion to look at your watch during a call, ask permission to do so, and apologize for it on the plea of other appointments.

In receiving morning visitors, it is not necessary that the lady should lay aside the employment in which she may be engaged, particularly if it consists of light or ornamental needlework. Politeness, however, requires that music, drawing, or any occupation which would completely engross the attention, be at once abandoned.



L'enfant terrible



4

Conversation—The "Saucy Chique", of Americanisms —How not to be a Lady Punster

There is no conversation so graceful, so varied, so sparkling, as that of an intellectual and cultivated woman. Excellence in this particular is, indeed, one of the attributes of the sex, and should be cultivated by every gentlewoman who aspires to please in general society.

In order to talk well, three conditions are indisputable—namely, tact, a good memory, and a fair education.

Remember that all "slang" is vulgar. It has become of late unfortunately prevalent, and we know many ladies who pride themselves on the saucy chique with which they adopt certain Ameri-

canisms, and other cant phrases of the day. Such habits cannot be too severely reprehended. They lower the tone of society and the standard of thought. It is a great mistake to suppose that slang is in any way a substitute for wit.

The use of proverbs is equally vulgar in conversation; and puns, unless they rise to the rank of witticisms, are scrupulously to be avoided. A lady punster is a most unpleasing phenomenon, and we would advise no young woman, however witty she may be, to cultivate this kind of verbal talent.

Long arguments in general company, however entertaining to the disputants, are tiresome to the last degree to all others. You should always endeavour to prevent the conversation from dwelling too long on one topic.

Religion is a topic which should never be introduced in society. It is the one subject on which persons are most likely to differ, and least able to preserve temper.

It is considered extremely ill-bred when two persons whisper in society, or converse in a language with which all present are not familiar.

Do not be always witty, even though you should be so happily gifted as to need the caution. To outshine others on every occasion is the surest road to unpopularity.

Always look, but never stare, at those with whom you converse.



Religious doubts

In order to meet the general needs of conversation in society, it is necessary that a gentlewoman should be acquainted with the current news and historical events of at least the last few years.

Never talk upon subjects of which you know nothing.

Those who introduce anecdotes into their conversation are warned that these should invariably be "short, witty, eloquent, new, and not far-fetched".

Scandal is the least excusable of all conversational vulgarities.



5

Invitations—Dainty Notepaper—Tradesmen

Notes of invitation and reply should be written on small paper of the best quality, and enclosed in envelopes to correspond.

Note-paper of the most dainty and fastidious kind

may be used by a lady with propriety and elegance, but only when she is writing to her friends and equals. Business letters or letters to her tradespeople should be written on plain paper, and enclosed either in an adhesive envelope, or sealed with red wax.

In writing to persons much your superior or inferior, use as few words as possible. In the former case, to take up much of a great man's time is to take a liberty; in the latter, to be diffuse is to be too familiar. It is only in familiar correspondence that long letters are permissible.

In writing to a tradesman, begin your letter by addressing him by name as—

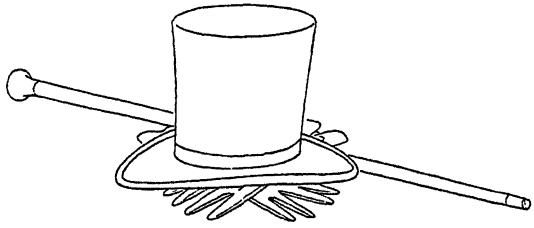
"Mr. Jones,—Sir."

A letter thus begun may, with propriety, be ended with—

"Sir, yours truly."

Lady correspondents are too apt to over-emphasize in their letter-writing, and in general evince a sad disregard of the laws of punctuation. We would respectfully suggest that a comma is not designed to answer every purpose, and that the underlining of every second or third word adds nothing to the eloquence or clearness of a letter, however certain it may be to provoke an unflattering smile upon the lips of the reader.

All letters must be prepaid.



6

The Promenade—with a Note on Behaviour in the Park

In England, a lady may accept the arm of a gentleman with whom she is walking, even though he be only an acquaintance. This is not the case either in America or on the Continent. There a lady can take the arm of no gentleman who is not either her husband, lover, or near relative.

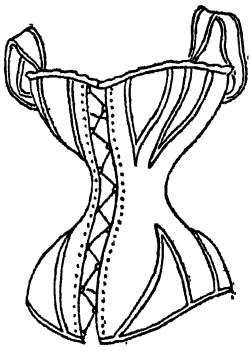
If a lady has been making purchases during her walk, she may permit the gentleman who accompanies her to carry any small parcel that she may have in her own hand; but she should not burden him with more than one under any circumstances whatever.

Two ladies may without any impropriety take each one arm of a single cavalier; but one lady cannot, with either grace or the sanction of custom, take the arms of two gentlemen at the same time.

When a lady is walking with a gentleman in a park, or public garden, or through the rooms of an exhibition, and becomes fatigued, it is the gentle-

man's duty to find her a seat. If, however, as is very frequently the case, he is himself obliged to remain standing, the lady should make a point of rising as soon as she is sufficiently rested, and not abuse either the patience or politeness of her companion.

When you meet friends or acquaintances in the streets, the exhibitions, or any public places, be careful not to pronounce their names so loudly as to attract the attention of bystanders. Never call across the street, or attempt to carry on a dialogue in a public vehicle, unless your interlocutor occupies the seat beside your own.



7

Dress—what Gentlewomen should and must not Wear —Note on Corsages, Boots, and Personal Cleanliness

To dress well requires something more than a full purse and a pretty figure. It needs taste, good

sense, and refinement. Dress may almost be classed as one of the fine arts, the cultivation of which is indispensable to any person moving in the upper or middle classes of society. Very clever women are too frequently indifferent to the graces of the toilette; and women who wish to be thought clever affect indifference. In the one case it is an error, and in the other a folly. It is not enough that a gentlewoman should be clever, or well educated, or well born. To take her due place in society, she must be acquainted with all that this little book proposes to teach. She must, above all else, know how to enter a room, how to perform a graceful salutation, and how to dress. (Of these three important qualifications, the most important, because the most observed, is the latter.)

Never dress very richly or showily in the street. It attracts attention of no enviable kind, and is looked upon as a want of good breeding. In the carriage a lady may dress as elegantly as she pleases. With respect to ball-room toilette, its fashions are so variable that statements which are true of it to-day may be false a month hence.

We may, perhaps, be permitted to suggest the following leading principles; but we do so with diffidence. Rich colours harmonize with rich brunette complexions and dark hair. Delicate colours are the most suitable for delicate and fragile styles of beauty. Very young ladies are never so suitably



Attention aux trains

attired as in white. Ladies who dance should wear dresses of light and diaphanous materials, such as tulle, gauze, crape, net, &c., over coloured silk slips. Silk dresses are not suitable for dancing. A married lady who dances only a few Quadrilles may wear a *décolleté* silk dress with propriety.

Very stout persons should never wear white. It has the effect of adding to the bulk of the figure.

Black and scarlet, or black and violet, are worn in mourning.

A lady in deep mourning should not dance at all.

However fashionable it may be to wear long dresses, those ladies who go to a ball with the intention of dancing and enjoying the dance, should cause their dresses to be made short enough to clear the ground. We would ask them whether it is not better to accept this slight deviation from an absurd fashion, than to appear for three parts of the evening in a torn and pinned-up skirt?

At small dinner-parties, low dresses are not so indispensable as they were held to be some years since. High dresses of transparent materials and low bodices with capes of black lace, are considered sufficiently full dress on these occasions. At large dinners only the fullest dress is appropriate.

Very young ladies should wear but little jewellery. Pearls are deemed most appropriate for the young and unmarried.

Let your jewellery be always the best of its kind.

Nothing is so vulgar, either in youth or age, as the use of false ornaments.

There is much propriety to be observed in the wearing of jewellery as in the wearing of dresses. Diamonds, pearls, rubies, and all transparent precious stones belong to evening dress, and should on no account be worn before dinner. In the morning let your rings be of a more simple and massive kind; wear no bracelets; and limit your jewellery to a good brooch, gold chain, and watch. Your diamonds and pearls would be as much out of place during the morning as a low dress, or a wreath.

An exquisite work of art, such as a fine cameo, or a natural rarity, such as a black pearl, is a more *distingué* possession than a large brilliant which any rich and tasteless vulgarian can buy as easily as yourself. Of all precious stones, the opal is one of the most lovely and least commonplace. No vulgar woman purchases an opal. She invariably prefers the more showy ruby, emerald or sapphire.

A true gentlewoman is always faultlessly neat. No richness of toilette in the afternoon, no diamonds in the evening, can atone for unbrushed hair, a soiled collar, or untidy slippers at breakfast.

Never be seen in the street without gloves; never let your gloves be of any material that is not kid or calf. Worsted or cotton gloves are unutterably vulgar.

In these days of public baths and universal pro-

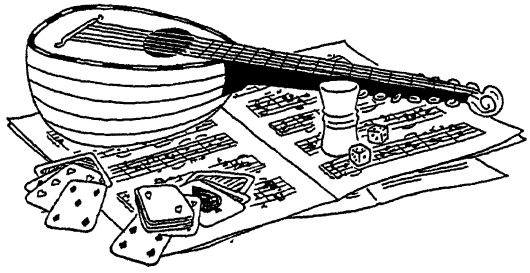
gress, we trust that it is unnecessary to do more than hint at the necessity of the most fastidious personal cleanliness. The hair, the teeth, the nails, should be faultlessly kept; and a muslin dress that has been worn once too often, a dingy pocket-handkerchief, or a soiled pair of light gloves, are things to be scrupulously avoided by any young lady who is ambitious of preserving the exterior of a gentlewoman.

Remember that the make of your corsage is of even greater importance than the make of your dress. No dressmaker can fit you well, or make your bodices in the manner most becoming to your figure, if the corsage beneath be not of the best description.

Your boots and gloves should always be faultless.

Perfumes should be used only in the evening, and then in moderation. Let your perfumes be of the most delicate and *recherché* kind. Nothing is more vulgar than a coarse ordinary scent; and of all coarse ordinary scents, the most objectionable are musk and patchouli.

Finally, every lady should remember that to dress well is a duty which she owes to society; but that to make it her idol is to commit something worse than folly. Fashion is made for woman; not woman for fashion.



8

Parties—Sacred and Comic Songs—Charades—How to lose at Cards

The morning party is a modern invention. It was unknown to our fathers and mothers. It begins about two o'clock and ends about five, and the entertainment consists for the most part of conversation, music, and (if there be a garden) croquet, lawn billiards, archery, &c. "Aunt Sally" is now out of fashion. The refreshments are given in the form of a *déjeûner à la fourchette.*

Elegant morning dress, general good manners, and some acquaintance with the topics of the day and the games above named, are all the qualifications especially necessary to a lady at a morning party.

An evening party begins about nine o'clock p.m. and ends about midnight, or somewhat later. Good breeding neither demands that you should present yourself at the commencement, nor remain till the close of the evening. You come and go as may be

most convenient to you, and by these means are at liberty to present yourself at two or three houses during a single evening.

General salutations of the company are now wholly disused.

If you are at the house of a new acquaintance and find yourself among entire strangers, remember that by so meeting under one roof you are all in a certain sense made known to one another, and should, therefore, converse freely, as equals. To shrink away to a side-table and affect to be absorbed in some album or illustrated work, or, if you find one unlucky acquaintance in the room, to fasten upon her like a drowning man clinging to a spar, are gaucheries which no shyness can excuse.

If you possess any musical accomplishments, do not wait to be pressed and entreated by your hostess, but comply immediately when she pays you the compliment of inviting you to play or sing. Remember, however, that only the lady of the house has the right to ask you. If others do so, you can put them off in some polite way.

If you are yourself the performer, bear in mind that in music as in speech, "brevity is the soul of wit". Two verses of a song, or four pages of a piece, are at all times enough to give pleasure. If your audience desire more they will ask for more; and it is infinitely more flattering to be encored than to receive the thanks of your hearers, not so



Con passione

much in gratitude for what you have given them, but in relief that you have left off. You should try to suit your music, like your conversation, to your company. A solo of Beethoven's would be as much out of place in some circles as a comic song at a quakers' meeting. To those who only care for the light popularities of the season, give Balfe, and Verdi, Glover and Julien. To connoisseurs, if you perform well enough to venture, give such music as will be likely to meet the exigencies of a fine taste. Above all, attempt nothing that you cannot execute with ease and precision.

If the party be of a small and social kind, and those games called by the French *les jeux innocents* are proposed, do not object to join in them when invited. It may be that they demand some slight exercise of wit and readiness, and that you do not feel yourself calculated to shine in them; but it is better to seem dull than disagreeable, and those who are obliging can always find some clever neighbour to assist them in the moment of need.

Impromptu charades are frequently organized at friendly parties. Unless you have really some talent for acting and some readiness of speech, you should remember that you only put others out and expose your own inability by taking part in these entertainments. Avoid being awkward and ridiculous.

Even though you may take no pleasure in cards,

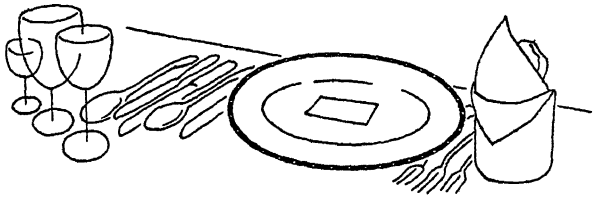
some knowledge of the etiquette and rules belonging to the games most in vogue is necessary to you in society. If a fourth hand is wanted at a rubber, you would be deemed guilty of an impoliteness if you refused to join.

Married people should not play at the same table, unless where the party is so small that it cannot be avoided. This rule supposes nothing so disgraceful to any married couple as dishonest collusion. The chances no longer remain perfectly even in favour of their adversaries.

Never play for higher stakes than you can afford to lose without regret. Cards should be resorted to for amusement only; for excitement never.

No well-bred person ever loses temper at the card-table. You have no right to sit down to the game unless you can bear a long run of ill-luck with perfect composure, and are prepared cheerfully to pass over any blunders that your partner may chance to make.

No very young lady should appear at an evening party without an escort.



9

Dinner—Pleasant Intercourse—How to Eat—Knives, &c.—Overfilled Plates—How to eject things from your Mouth—Drink

The number of guests at a dinner-party should always be determined by the size of the table. When the party is too small, conversation flags and a general air of desolation pervades the table. When they are too many, every one is inconvenienced. A space of two feet should be allowed to each person.

It requires some tact to distribute your guests so that each shall find himself with a neighbour to his taste; it is worth some consideration. If you have a wit, or a particular good talker, among your visitors, it is well to place him near the centre of the table, where he can be heard and talked to by all. It is obviously a bad plan to place two such persons in close proximity. They extinguish each other. Neither is it advisable to assign two neighbouring seats to two gentlemen of the same profession, as they are likely to fall into exclusive conversation and

amuse no one but themselves. A little consideration of the politics, religious opinions, and tastes of his friends, will enable a judicious host to avoid many quicksands, and establish much pleasant intercourse on the occasion of a dinner-party.

As soon as you are seated at table, remove your gloves, place your table-napkin across your knees, and remove the roll which you will find probably within it to the left side of your plate.

The soup should be placed on the table first. It is old-fashioned to ask your guests if they will take "soup or fish". All experienced diners take both. In any case, it is inhospitable to appear to force a choice upon a visitor, when that visitor, in all probability, will prefer to take his soup first and his fish afterwards. All well-ordered dinners begin with soup, whether in summer or winter. The lady of the house should help it, and send it round without asking each individual in turn. It is as much an understood thing as the bread beside each plate, and those who do not choose it are always at liberty to leave it untasted.

In eating soup, remember always to take it from the side of the spoon, and to make no sound in doing so.

You should never ask for a second supply of either soup or fish; it delays the next course, and keeps the table waiting.

Never offer to "assist" your neighbours to this

or that dish. The word is inexpressibly vulgar—all the more vulgar for its affectation of elegance. "Shall I send you some mutton?" or "May I help you to grouse?" is better chosen and better bred.

As a general rule it is better not to ask your guests if they will partake of the dishes; send the plates round. At very large dinners it is sometimes customary to distribute little lists of the order of the dishes at intervals along the table. It must be confessed that this gives somewhat the air of a dinner at an hotel; but it has the advantage of enabling the visitors to select their fare, and, as "forewarned is forearmed", to keep a corner, as the children say, for their favourite dishes.

As soon as you are helped, begin to eat; or, if the viands are too hot for your palate, take up your knife and fork and appear to begin.

Never offer to pass on the plate to which you have been helped. The lady of the house who sends your plate to you is the best judge of precedence at her own table.

In helping soup, fish, or any other dish, remember that to overfill a plate is as bad as to supply it too scantily.

We presume it is scarcely necessary to remind our fair reader that she is never, under any circumstances, to convey her knife to her mouth. Peas are eaten with the fork; tarts, curry, and puddings of all kinds with the spoon.

Asparagus must be helped with the asparagus-tongs.

In eating asparagus, it is well to observe what others do, and act accordingly.

In eating stone fruit, such as cherries, damsons, &c., the same rule had better be observed. Some put the stones out from the mouth into a spoon, and so convey them to the plate. Others cover the lips with the hand, drop them unseen into the palm, and so deposit them unseen on to the side of the plate. In our own opinion, the last is the better way, as it effectually conceals the return of the stones, which is certainly the point of highest importance. Of one thing we may be sure, and that is they must never be dropped from the mouth to the plate.

Young ladies seldom drink more than three glasses of wine at dinner; but married ladies, professional ladies, and those accustomed to society and habits of affluence, will habitually take five or even six, whether in their own homes or at the tables of their friends.

Unless you are a total abstainer, it is extremely uncivil to decline taking wine if you are invited to do so. In accepting, you have only to pour a little fresh wine into your glass, look at the person who invited you, bow slightly, and take a sip from the glass.

It is particularly ill-bred to empty your glass on these occasions.

Instead of cooling their wines in the ice-pail, some hosts have of late years introduced clear ice upon the table, broken up in small lumps, to be put inside the glasses. This is an innovation that cannot be too strictly reprehended or too soon abolished. Melting ice can but weaken the quality and flavour of the wine. It savours too much of economy on the part of a host to insinuate the ice inside the glasses of his guests when the wine could be more effectively iced outside the bottle.

It is wise never to partake of any dish without knowing of what ingredients it is composed. You can always ask the servant who hands it to you, and you thereby avoid all danger of having to commit the impoliteness of leaving it, and showing that you do not approve of it.

Never speak while you have anything in your mouth.

Be careful never to taste soups or puddings till you are sure they are sufficiently cool, as, by disregarding this caution, you may be compelled to swallow what is dangerously hot, or be driven to the unpardonable alternative of returning it to your plate.

When eating or drinking, avoid every kind of audible testimony to the fact.

If you should unfortunately overturn or break anything, do not apologize for it. You can show your regret in your face, but it is not well-bred to put it into words.



" Is the pudd good? "

To abstain from taking the last piece on the dish, or the last glass of wine in the decanter, only because it is the last, is highly ill-bred. It implies a fear on your part that the vacancy cannot be supplied, and almost conveys an affront to your host.

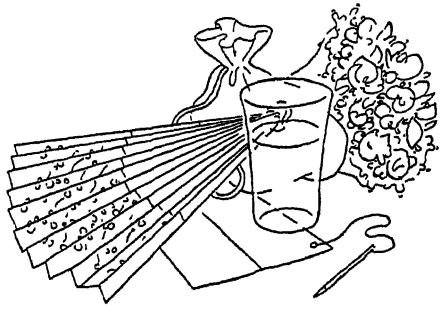
Every dinner should begin with soup, be followed by fish, and include some kind of game. "The soup is to the dinner," we are told by Grismod de la Regnière, "what the portico is to a building, or the overture to an opera."

To this aphorism we may be permitted to add that a *chasse* of cognac or curaçoa at the close of the dinner is like the epilogue to the end of a comedy.

If you are a mother, you will be wise never to let your children make their appearance at dessert when you entertain friends at dinner. Children are out of place on these occasions. Your guests only tolerate them through politeness; their presence interrupts the genial flow of after-dinner conversation; and you may rely upon it that, with the exception of yourself, and perhaps your husband, there is not a person at table who does not wish them in the nursery.

The duties of hostess at a dinner-party are not onerous; but they demand tact and good breeding, grace of bearing, and self-possession in no ordinary degree. She has no active duties to perform; but she must neglect nothing, forget nothing, put all her guests at their ease, encourage the timid, draw out

the silent, and pay every possible attention to the requirements of each and all around her. No accident must ruffle her temper. No disappointment must embarrass her. She must see her old china broken without a sigh, and her best glass shattered with a smile. In short, to quote the language of a clever contemporary, she must have "the genius of tact to perceive, and the genius of finesse to execute; ease and frankness of manner; a knowledge of the world that nothing can surprise; a calmness of temper that nothing can disturb; and a kindness of disposition that can never be exhausted."



10

Balls

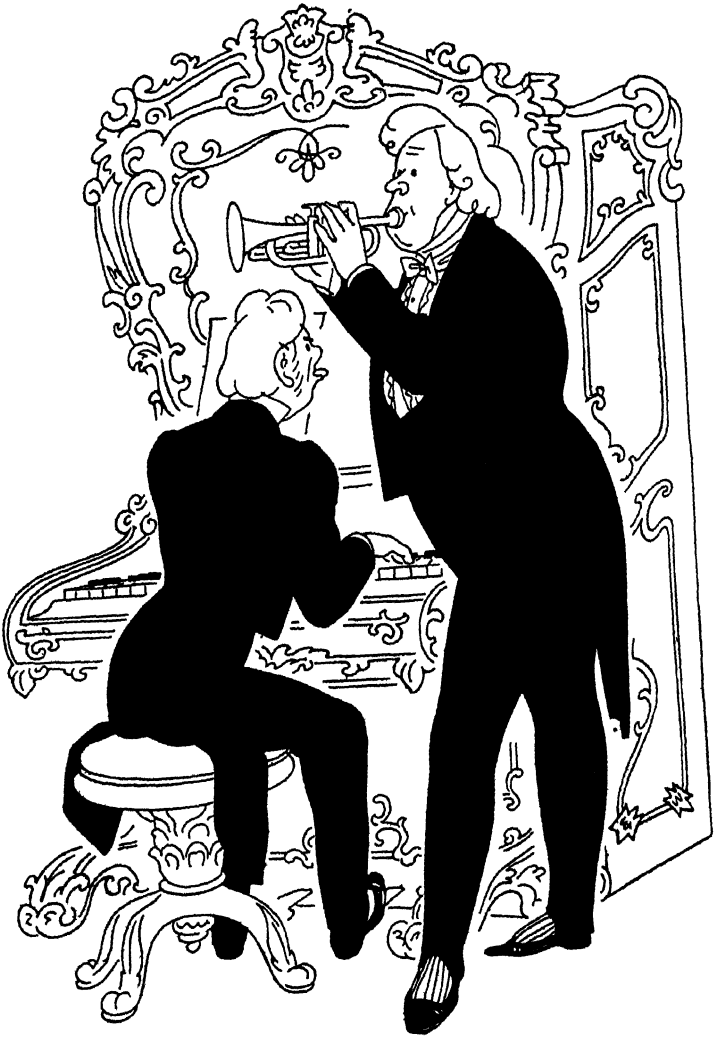
The number of invitations to a ball must be limited by the proportions of the ball-room. A

prudent hostess will always invite a few more guests than she really desires to entertain, in the certainty that there will be some deserters when the appointed evening comes round; but she will at the same time remember that to overcrowd her room is to spoil the pleasures of those who love dancing, and that a party of this kind when too numerously attended is as great a failure as one at which too few are present.

Abundance of light and free ventilation are indispensable to the spirits and comfort of the dancers.

Good music is necessary to the prosperity of a ball. No hostess should tax her friends for this part of the entertainment. It is the most injudicious economy imaginable. Ladies are tied to the pianoforte; and as few amateurs have been trained in the art of playing dance music with strict attention to time and accent, a total and general discontent is sure to result. Those who give private balls will do well ever to bear this in mind. For a small party, a piano and cornopean makes a very pleasant combination. Unless where several instruments are engaged, we do not recommend the introduction of the violin; although in some respects the finest of all solo instruments, it is apt to sound thin and shrill when employed on mere inexpressive dance tunes, and played by a mere dance player.

Invitations to a ball should be issued in the name of the lady of the house. Elegant printed forms,



A pleasant combination

some of them printed in gold or silver, are to be had at every stationer's by those who prefer them. The sealing-wax used should be of some delicate hue.

A room should in all cases be provided for the accommodation of the ladies. In this room there ought to be several looking-glasses; attendants to assist the fair visitors in the arrangement of their hair and dress; and some place in which the cloaks and shawls can be laid in order, and found at a moment's notice. It is well to affix tickets to the cloaks, giving a duplicate at the same time to each lady, as at public theatres and concert-rooms. Needles and thread should also be at hand, to repair any little accident incurred in dancing.

Dancers are generally hungry people, and feel themselves much aggrieved if the supply of sandwiches proves unequal to the demand. Gentlemen who have been dancing, and are unprepared for walking, object to go home on foot, or seek vehicles for their wives and daughters. Female servants who have been in attendance on the visitors during a whole evening ought not to be sent out. If even men-servants are kept, they may find it difficult to procure as many cabs as are necessary. The best thing that the giver of a private ball can do under these circumstances is to engage a policeman with a lanthorn to attend on the pavement during the evening, and to give notice during the morning at a

neighbouring cab-stand, so as to ensure a sufficient number of vehicles at the time when they are likely to be required.

To attempt to dance without a knowledge of dancing is not only to make one's self ridiculous, but one's partner also.

An introduction given for the mere purpose of enabling a lady and gentleman to go through a dance together does not constitute an acquaintance-ship. The lady is at liberty to pass the gentleman in the park the next day without recognition.

It is not necessary that the lady should be acquainted with the steps, in order to walk gracefully through a Quadrille. An easy carriage and a knowledge of the figure is all that is requisite. A round dance, however, should on no account be attempted without a thorough knowledge of the steps, and some previous practice.

No person who has not a good ear for time and tune need hope to dance well.

No lady should accept refreshments from a stranger at a public ball; for she would thereby lay herself under a pecuniary obligation. For these she must rely on her father, brothers, or old friends.

Good taste forbids that a lady should dance too frequently with the same partner at either a public or private ball.

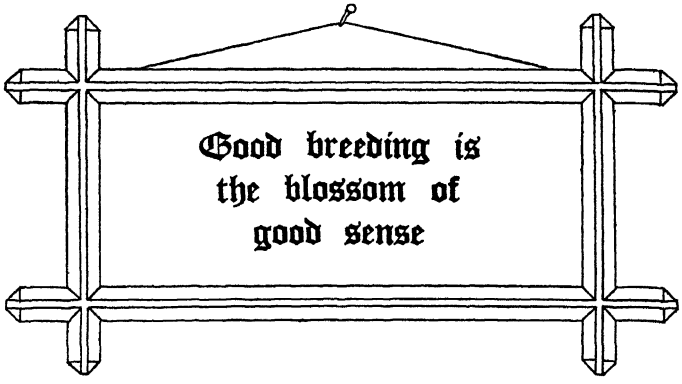
Engaged persons should be careful not to commit this conspicuous solecism.

Engagements for one dance should not be made while the present dance is yet in progress.

Never be seen without gloves in a ball-room, though it were only for a few moments. Ladies who dance much and are particularly *soignée* in matters relating to the toilette, take a second pair of gloves to replace the first when soiled.

A thoughtful hostess will never introduce a bad dancer to a good one, because she has no right to punish one friend in order to oblige another.

It is not customary for married persons to dance together in society.



11

A General Summing-up

We have already cautioned you against the repetition of titles. Deference can always be better expressed in the voice, manner, and countenance than in any form of words.

Never speak of absent persons by only their Christian or surnames; but always as Mr. —— or Mrs. ——. Above all, never name anybody by the first letter of his name. Married people are sometimes guilty of this flagrant offence against taste.

No lady should permit any gentleman who is not a near relative, or a very old friend of her family, to defray the cost of her entrance fee to any theatre or exhibition, or to pay for her refreshments or vehicles when she happens to be out under his protection.

When you cannot agree with the propositions advanced in general conversation, be silent. If pressed for your opinion, give it with modesty. Never defend your own views too warmly. When you find others remain unconvinced, drop the subject.

Never boast of your birth, your money, your grand friends, or anything that is yours. If you have travelled do not introduce that information into your conversation at every opportunity. Anyone can travel with money and leisure. The real distinction is to come home with enlarged views, improved tastes, and a mind free from prejudice.

Never undervalue the gift which you are yourself offering: you have no business to offer it if it is valueless. Neither say that you do not want it yourself, or that you should throw it away if it were not accepted, &c. &c. Such apologies would be insults if true, and mean nothing if false.

Married ladies may occasionally accept presents from gentlemen who visit frequently at their houses, and who desire to show their sense of the hospitality which they receive there. An author may offer his books, or a painter his sketches, with grace and propriety. Offerings of flowers and game are unexceptionable, and may be made even to those whose position is superior to that of the giver.

Converse with a foreigner in his own language. If not competent to do so, apologize, and beg permission to speak English.



With the compliments of the author

To get in and out of a carriage gracefully is a simple but important accomplishment. If there is but one step, and you are going to take your seat facing the horses, put your left foot on the step, and enter the carriage with your right, in such a manner as to drop at once into your seat. If you are about to sit with your back to the horses, reverse the process. As you step into the carriage be careful to keep your back towards the seat you are about to occupy, so as to avoid the awkwardness of turning when you are once in. When you leave a carriage, first a dainty little boot should appear, followed by a trim ankle. You may lay your fingers on the footman's arm. Never grasp it. He is a servant.

A Note on Gentlewomen

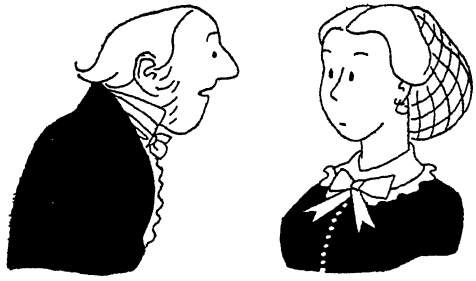
Since those books from which we have taken these extracts were written, the word "gentlewoman" has undergone a metamorphosis. The Victorian gentlewoman, as presented in this volume, was a gay if sexless creature. Her gloves and boots were beyond reproach; she prefers opals to showier stones; she avoids puns; she does not walk arm in arm with two gentlemen simultaneously; her conversation is "graceful . . . varied . . . sparkling." She shines but she does not glitter; she attracts but she does not allure; she pleases but she does not dazzle . . .

To-day the word "gentlewoman" carries with it its inevitable adjective. Unless she be decayed, then she can be no true gentlewoman. But if the gaiety is gone, the respectability remains. She runs tea shoppes with home-made scones, presenting the bill with an air of refined reluctance, accepting the money with actual distaste. She sells things made of coloured wools. Her brother is—or was—either a colonel of militia or a vicar. She clings on to that sadly devalued Railway stock which was given to her when she was twenty-one and which now serves to supplement her minute income. Being completely out of touch with modern diversions such as bombing aeroplanes, swing music, and light-hearted divorce, she is regarded by her sister's children's children with affectionate pity.

She has—and needs—sublime courage.

II

ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEMEN



1

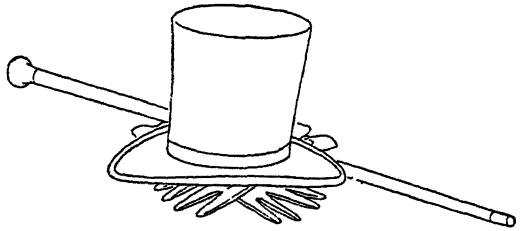
Conversation—Be Fairly Deep—Gentlewomen not Triflers

LET your conversation be adapted as skilfully as may be to your company. Some men make a point of talking commonplaces to all ladies alike, as if a woman could only be a trifler. Others, on the contrary, seem to forget in what respects the education of a lady differs from that of a gentleman, and commit the opposite error of conversing on topics with which ladies are seldom acquainted. A woman of sense has as much right to be annoyed by the one, as a lady of ordinary education by the other. You cannot pay a finer compliment to a woman of refinement and esprit than by leading the conversa-

tion into such a channel as may mark your appreciation of her superior attainments.

In talking with ladies of ordinary education, choose only such subjects as are likely to be of interest to them.

Do not use a classical quotation in the presence of ladies without apologizing for it, or translating it. Even this should only be done when no other phrase would so aptly express your meaning. Whether in the presence of ladies or gentlemen, much display of learning is pedantic and out of place.



2

The Promenade—Avoid giving Gentlewomen the Fatigue of looking up to your Level

A well-bred man must entertain no respect for the brim of his hat. "A bow", says La Fontaine, "is a note drawn at sight." You are bound to acknowledge it immediately, and to the full amount. The two most elegant men of their day, Charles the

Second and George the Fourth, never failed to take off their hats to the meanest of their subjects. Always bear this example in mind; and remember that to nod, or merely to touch the brim of the hat, is far from courteous. True politeness demands that the hat should be quite lifted from the head.

On meeting friends with whom you are likely to shake hands, remove your hat with the left hand in order to leave the right hand free.

If you meet a lady in the street whom you are sufficiently intimate to address, do not stop her, but turn round and walk beside her in whichever direction she is going. When you have said all that you wish to say, you can take your leave.

If you meet a lady with whom you are not particularly well acquainted, wait for her recognition before you venture to bow to her.

In bowing to a lady whom you are not going to address, lift your hat with that hand which is farthest from her. For instance, if you pass her on the right side, use your left hand; if on the left, use your right.

If you are on horseback and wish to converse with a lady who is on foot you must dismount and lead your horse, so as not to give her the fatigue of looking up to your level. Neither should you subject her to the impropriety of carrying on a conversation in a tone necessarily louder than is sanctioned in public by the laws of good breeding.

In walking with a lady, take charge of any small parcel, parasol, or book with which she may be encumbered.

If you so far forget what is elegant as to smoke in the street, at least never omit to fling away your cigar if you speak to a lady.



3

Dress—Handsome Waistcoats—Turquoise Pins—Caps

A great French writer has said, with as much grace as philosophy, that the artist and man of letters needs only a black coat and the absence of pretension to place him on the level of the best society. It must be observed, however, that this remark applies only to the intellectual workers, who, if they do occasionally commit a minor solecism in dress or manners, are forgiven on account of their fame and talents. Other individuals are compelled to study what we have elsewhere called the "by-

laws of society"; and it would be well if artists and men of letters would more frequently do the same. As with ladies, it is not enough that a man should be clever, or well educated, or well born; to take his place in society he must be acquainted with all this little book proposes to teach.

A gentleman should always be so well dressed that his dress shall never be observed at all. Does this sound like an enigma? It is not meant for one. It only implies that perfect simplicity is perfect elegance. If any friend should say to you, "What a handsome waistcoat you have on!" you may depend that a less handsome waistcoat would be better taste. If you hear it said that Mr. So-and-So wears superb jewellery, you may conclude beforehand that he wears too much. Display, in short, is ever to be avoided, especially in matters of dress. The toilette is the domain of the fair sex. Let a wise man leave its graces and luxuries to his wife, daughters or sisters, and seek to be appreciated himself for something of higher worth than the embroidery upon his shirt front, or the trinkets on his chain.

To be too much in the fashion is as vulgar as to be too far behind it. No really well-bred man follows every new cut that he sees in his tailor's fashion-book. Only very young men, and those not of the most aristocratic circles, are guilty of this folly.

To be *too* well fitted is to look like a tailor's assis-



What the well-dressed Frenchman will wear

tant. This is the great fault which we have to find in the style of even the best-bred Frenchmen. They look as if they had just stepped out of a fashion-book and lack the careless ease which makes an English gentleman look as if his clothes belonged to him, and not he to his clothes.

In the evening, though only in the bosom of your own family, wear only black, and be as scrupulous to put on a dress coat as if you expected visitors. If you have sons, bring them up to do the same. It is the observance of these minor trifles in domestic etiquette which marks the true gentleman.

Let your jewellery be of the best, but the least gaudy description, and wear it very sparingly. In the morning let your ring be a seal ring, with your crest or arms engraved upon it. In the evening it may be a diamond. Your studs, however valuable, should be small.

Unless you are a snuff-taker, never carry anything but a white pocket handkerchief.

If in the morning you wear a long cravat fastened by a pin, be careful to avoid what may be called alliteration of colour. We have seen a turquoise pin worn in a violet-coloured cravat, and the effect was frightful. Choose, if possible, complementary colours, and their secondaries. For instance, if the stone in your pin be a turquoise wear it with brown, or crimson mixed with black, or black with orange. If a ruby, contrast it with shades of green. The

same rule holds good with regard to the mixture and contrast of colours in your waistcoat or cravat. Thus, a buff waistcoat and a blue tie, or brown and blue, or brown and green, or brown and magenta, green and magenta, green and mauve, are all good arrangements of colour. A black velvet waistcoat should only be worn at a dinner-party.

Very light-coloured cloths for morning wear are to be avoided, even in the height of summer; and fancy cloths of strange patterns and mixtures are exceedingly objectionable.

Coloured shirts may be worn in the morning; but they should be small in pattern and quiet in colour.

With a coloured shirt, always wear a white collar.

Never wear a cap, unless in the fields or garden; and let your hat be always black.

If your sight compels you to wear spectacles, let them be of the best and lightest make, and mounted in gold or blue steel.

If you suffer from weak sight, and are obliged to wear coloured glasses, let them be of blue or smoke colour. Green are detestable.



4

How to mount a Lady

In riding, as in walking, give the lady the wall.

When you mount a lady, hold your hand at a convenient distance from the ground, that she may place her foot in it. As she springs, you aid her by the impetus of your hand.

In doing this, it is always better to agree upon a signal, that her spring and your assistance may come at the same moment.

For this purpose there is no better form than the old duelling of " one, two, three ".

When the lady is mounted it is your place to find the stirrup for her, and guide her left foot to it. When this is done, she rises in her seat and you assist her to draw her clothing straight.

Even when a groom is present, it is more polite for the gentleman himself to perform this office for his fair companion; as it would be more polite for him to hand her a chair than to have it handed by a servant.

If the lady be light, you must take care not to give too much of an impetus in mounting her. We have known a lady nearly thrown over her horse by a misplaced zeal of this kind.

In riding with a lady, never permit her to pay the tolls.

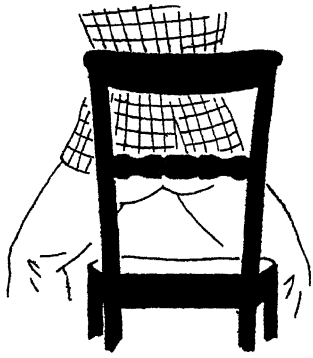
If a gate has to be opened, we need hardly observe that it is your place to hold it open till the lady has passed through.

In driving, a gentleman places himself with his back to the horses, and leaves the best seat for the ladies.

If you are alone in a carriage with a lady, never sit beside her, unless you are her husband, father, son, or brother. Even though you be her affianced lover, you should still observe this rule of etiquette. To do otherwise would be to assume the unceremonious air of a husband.

When the carriage stops, the gentleman should alight first, in order to assist the lady.

A gentleman cannot be too careful to avoid stepping on lady's dresses when he gets in or out of a carriage. He should also beware of shutting them in the door.



5

Parties—Your Nose not a Trombone—Never offer a Still Warm Chair to a Gentlewoman—The Dangers of "Consequences"

Always put your gloves on before entering the drawing-room, and be careful that there is no speck of mud upon your trousers.

When your name is announced, look for the lady of the house and pay your respects to her before you even seem to see any other of your friends who may be in the room. At very large and fashionable receptions, the hostess is generally to be found near the door.

If you have occasion to use your handkerchief, do so as noiselessly as possible. To blow your nose as if it were a trombone, or to turn your head aside when using your handkerchief, are vulgarities scrupulously to be avoided.

Never stand upon the hearthrug with your back to the fire, either in a friend's house or your own. We have seen even well-bred men at evening parties commit this selfish and vulgar solecism.

Never offer anyone the chair from which you have just risen, unless there be no other disengaged. It may be still warm from your person.

If you sing comic songs be careful that they are of the most unexceptionable kind, and likely to offend neither the tastes nor the prejudices of the society in which you find yourself.

The game of " consequences " is one which unfortunately gives too much scope to liberty of expression. If you join in this game, we cannot too earnestly enjoin you never to write down one word which the most pure-minded woman present might not read aloud without a blush. Jests of an equivocal character are not only vulgar, but contemptible.

To be acquainted with every detail of the dinner table is of the highest importance to every gentleman. Ease, *savoir faire*, and good breeding are nowhere more indispensable than at table, and the absence of them are nowhere more apparent. How to eat soup and what to do with a cherry-stone are weighty considerations when taken as the index of social status; and it is not too much to say that a man who elected to take claret with his fish, or ate peas with his knife, would justly risk the punishment of being banished from good society.



"Shall we join the ladies?"

We may observe that to sit long in the dining-room after the ladies have retired is to pay a bad compliment to the hostess and her fair visitors; and that it is a still worse tribute to rejoin them with a flushed face and impaired powers of thought. A refined gentleman is always temperate.



6

Balls

Bear in mind that all Casino habits are to be scrupulously avoided in a private ball-room. It is an affront to a highly bred lady to hold her hand behind you, or on your hip, when dancing a round dance. We have seen even aristocratic young men of the "fast" genus commit these unpardonable offences against taste and decorum.

7

Good Manners as a Whole

In entering a morning exhibition, or public room, where ladies are present, the gentleman should lift his hat.

If you accompany ladies to a theatre or concert-room, precede them to clear the way and secure their seats.

Do not smoke shortly before entering the presence of ladies.

A Note on Gentlemen

The Victorian period was one when the word "Gentleman" began to take on a moral connotation and Nature's Gentleman began to sprout beside the cultivated variety. For a man to be a true gentleman it was also necessary that he be a fine Christian and conduct himself as such. For the gentlemen of the Regency were not distinguished either by their morality or by their conduct. George IV—"the first gentleman of Europe"—was frequently drunk in the presence of ladies. The masculine clothes of that earlier period made the male as gorgeous as the female and a good time was had by all. During the nineteenth century, however, clothing and conduct grew steadily drabber and drabber although, as is shown in Section 3 of this volume, there were occasional outbursts in the form of waistcoats and tiepins. An extremely secure society such as that of the Victorian age had to diversify the smooth course of its days by providing delicious pitfalls and bunkers. These could be avoided by the study of etiquette books.

Did gentlemanliness start going out of fashion when men ceased to take top hats with them into drawing-rooms? We see in the decline of the top hat the beginning of the decay of gentility. We shudder to contemplate the completeness of its disintegration. For, alas, "trade" is no longer vulgar so long as it is not transacted on a cash and carry basis. The cheque is considered to be less demeaning than the pound note if also less reassuring. A gentleman to-day has been defined as a man who is never unintentionally rude. This definition, like all-in wrestling, covers a multitude of sins.

III
BALLS



1

Gentlemen's Wear, comprising Enamel Boots and Costly Trifles

For balls, a black suit, thin enamelled boots, a white neckcloth, and white or delicate grey gloves, are the chief points of a gentleman's dress. He may wear an embroidered shirt; and his waistcoat may be of silk. White waistcoats are no longer fashionable. Much display of jewellery is no proof of good taste. A handsome watch-chain, with, perhaps, the addition of a few costly trifles suspended to it, and a set of shirt studs, are the only ornaments of this kind that a gentleman should wear.

2

Balls—A Few Notes—How to avoid Disagreeable Scenes

If a lady happens to forget a previous engagement and stand up with another partner, the gentleman whom she has thus slighted is bound to believe that she has acted from mere inadvertence, and should by no means suffer his pride to master his good temper. To cause a disagreeable scene in a private ball-room is to affront your host and hostess, and to make yourself absurd.

Young gentlemen are earnestly advised not to limit their conversation to remarks on the weather and the heat of the room. It is to a certain extent incumbent on them to do something more than dance when they invite a lady to join a Quadrille. If it be only upon the news of the day, a gentleman should be able to offer at least three or four observations to his partner in the course of a long half-hour.



3

The Quadrille: A Dance of Ease and Propriety

The Quadrille is the most universal, as it is certainly the most sociable, of all fashionable dances. It admits of pleasant conversation, frequent interchange of partners, and is adapted to every age. The young or old, the ponderous paterfamilias or his sylph-like daughter, may with equal propriety take part in its easy and elegant figures. Even an occasional blunder is of less consequence in this dance than in many others, for each personage is in some degree free as to his own movements, not being compelled by the continual embrace of his partner to dance either better or worse than he may find convenient.



4

The Polka — Perform with Spirit — Methods of clasping Gentlewomen

Perhaps no dance affords greater facilities for the display of ignorance or skill, elegance or vulgarity, than the Polka. The step is simple and easily acquired, but the method of dancing it varies *ad infinitum*. Some persons race and romp through the dance in a manner fatiguing to themselves and dangerous to their fellow-dancers. Others (though this is more rare) drag their partner listlessly along, with a sovereign contempt alike for the requirements of the time and spirit of the music. Some gentlemen hold their partner so tight that she is half suffocated; others hold her so loosely that she continually slips away from him. All these extremes are equally objectionable, and defeat the graceful intention of the dance. It should be performed quietly, but with spirit. The feet should glide swiftly along the floor—not hopping or jumping as if the boards were red-hot.



" You should see me dance the Polka ! "

You should clasp your partner lightly but firmly round the waist with your right arm.

Your left hand takes her right hand; but beware of elevating your arm and hers in the air, or holding them out straight, which suggests the idea of a windmill.

We repeat: never place your left hand on your hip or behind you!

In dancing the Polka, or any circular dance where a large number of couples are performing at the same time, the gentleman must be careful to steer his fair burden safely through the mazes of the crowded ball-room. A little watchfulness can almost always avoid collisions and a good dancer would consider himself disgraced if any mishap occurred to a lady under his care. Keep a sharp look out. Your partner will be grateful that your consideration has preserved her from the dismal plight in which we have seen ladies emerge from this dance. Their coiffure disordered, their dresses torn, and their cheeks crimson with fatigue and mortification, while their indignant glances plainly showed the anger they did not care to express in words, and which their reckless partner had fully deserved. A torn dress is sometimes not the heaviest penalty incurred: we have known more than one instance where ladies have been lamed for weeks through the culpable carelessness of their partners, their tender feet have been half crushed beneath some heavy boot in one

of these awkward collisions. This is a severe price to pay for an evening's amusement. Ladies, on the other hand, will do well to remember that by leaning heavily upon their partner's shoulder, dragging back from his encircling arm, or otherwise impeding the freedom of his movements, they materially add to his labour and take from his pleasure in the dance. They should endeavour to lean as lightly and give as little trouble as possible; for, however flattering to the vanity of the nobler sex may be the idea of feminine dependence, we question whether the reality, in the shape of a dead weight upon their aching arms throughout a Polka or Valse of twenty minutes' duration, would be acceptable to even the most chivalrous amongst them.



5

The Valse—Whirling—Dangers of Collision—Avoid Tall Gentlewomen

Twenty years ago, the Valse (or as it was then pronounced, Waltz) was a stately measure, danced with a gravity and deliberation. Couples wheeled round and round and consequently soon became giddy, although the music was not played above half as fast as the valse music of our day. We are bound to admit that this stately fashion of waltzing was infinitely more graceful than the style which has superseded it. But, having confessed so much, we may venture to add that the Valse, as danced by the present generation, possesses a spirit, lightness, and variety quite unknown to its stately predecessor.

At its first introduction, the Waltz was received with great mistrust by the older portion of the community. If it was to be tolerated at all in correct society, it must at least be danced in a deliberate manner, consonant with the dignity of the English character. It was, therefore, taken at half its original tempo; it ceased to be the giddy, intoxicating whirl in which the Germans delight, and subsided into the comparatively insipid and spiritless affair known thirty years ago as the "German Waltz".

We are indebted to the mirth-loving capital of Austria for the brilliant *Valse à deux temps*, which was introduced to our notice shortly before the Polka appeared in England, and owed its popularity to the revolution in public taste effected by that dance.

As the movements of this dance are necessarily very rapid, the danger of collisions is proportionately increased; and the gentleman will do well to remember and act upon the cautions contained in the previous pages of this book, under the head of "the Polka".

The Deux Temps is a somewhat fatiguing Valse, and after two or three turns round the room, the gentleman should pause to allow his partner to rest. He should be careful to select a lady whose height does not present too striking a contrast to his own; for it looks ridiculous to see a tall man dancing with a short woman, or vice versa.



6

The Cotillon—Jolly Floral Romps—Merry Groups—A Coquettish Dance

We shall describe the Cotillon as we have seen it in the palaces of Italy, where it is danced with enthusiasm, and diversified by an innumerable number of figures. It is never commenced until towards the close of the ball at so advanced an hour that all the sober portion of the assembly have retired.

Several gentlemen assume the names of flowers or plants, such as the honeysuckle, woodbine, ivy, &c. A lady is then requested to name her favourite flower; and the fortunate swain who bears its name springs forward and valses off with her in triumph. It is usual to make one, or at the most two, turns round the room, and then restore the lady to her own partner, who in the meantime has perhaps been the chosen one of another lady. All having regained their places each gentleman valses with his own

partner once round the room, or remains sitting by her side, as she may feel inclined.

Baskets filled with small bouquets are brought in, each gentleman provides himself with a bouquet, and presents it to the lady with whom he wishes to dance.

Sometimes a light pole or staff is introduced, to the top of which are attached long streamers of different-coloured ribbons. A lady takes one of these to several of her fair companions in turn, each of whom chooses a ribbon, and holding it firmly in her hand, follows the leading lady to the room. Here they are met by an equal number of gentlemen likewise grouped around a leader who carried the pole, while each holds a streamer of his favourite colour, or that which he imagines would be selected by the *dame de ses pensées*. The merry groups compare notes, those who possess streamers of the same colour pair off in couples, and valse gaily round the room, returning to places as before.

Six or eight ladies and the same number of gentlemen form in two lines, facing each other. The leading lady throws a soft worsted ball of bright colours at the gentleman with whom she wishes to dance. He catches it, throws it back to the fair group, and valses off with his partner. Whoever catches the returning ball has the right to throw next; and the same ceremony is repeated until all have chosen their partners, with whom they valse

round the room, returning to places as usual. Sometimes a handkerchief is substituted for the ball; but the latter is better, being more easily thrown and caught.

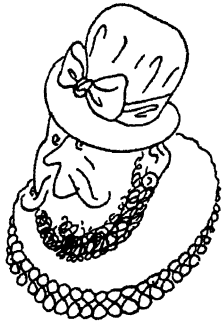
Six or eight chairs are placed in a circle, the backs turned inwards. Ladies seat themselves in the chairs, gentlemen move slowly round in front of them. Each lady throws her handkerchief or bouquet at the gentleman with whom she wishes to dance as he passes before her. Valse round as usual and return to places.

Sometimes a gentleman is blindfolded, and placed in a chair. Two ladies take a seat on either side of him; and he is bound to make his selection without having seen the face of his partner. Having done so he pulls the covering from his eyes, and valses off with her. It is a curious circumstance that mistakes seldom occur, the gentleman being generally sufficiently clairvoyant to secure the partner he desires.

We have here described a few of the most striking figures of the Cotillon. Enough has been told to show the graceful, coquettish character of the dance, which adapts itself admirably to the Italian nature, and is as much beloved by them as the Valse by the Germans or the Cachucha by the dark-eyed maidens of Spain. We should rejoice to see this charming stranger naturalized in English ball-rooms.



Offside !



7

Sir Roger de Coverley—Rustic Strains

Long may the cheerful rustic strains of this dance be heard in our ball-rooms, and prove we have not grown too fine or too foolish to take pleasure in the simple dances of our ancestors.

8

Notice

In discussing balls, we have endeavoured to avoid as much as possible the use of French words, and to give our directions in the plain mother tongue.

The Ballroom

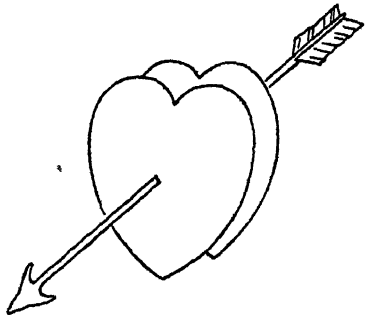
The Victorian gentleman was seen at his best in the ballroom. He could with propriety wear an embroidered shirt and suspend "a few costly trifles" from a handsome watch-chain. Dances were performed "quietly but with spirit." Consider the waltz, that dance that was once attacked (by Lord Byron) as being a lascivious and over-exciting measure. We confess to sharing his Lordship's view. For it seems to us that as contacts in dancing tend to become more and more intimate, there is a marked and parallel decline in their physiological effect. The more clothes are worn by the gentlewoman and the greater the distance separating her from her partner, the more stimulating the dance.

We recently had cause to visit a place of entertainment in the glamorous section of Broadway, New York, in the United States of America. An orchestra composed of coons released a series of punctuated explosions to whose rhythm young men and women moved in each other's arms, locked and merged together, mouth to mouth, body to body. They moved as if they were drugged or had sunk into a deep, disturbed sleep. Although partners were changed during every brief lull in the bombardment the same physical contact was immediately re-established.

The display was so dolorous and the intimacy so pathologically sexless that we were moved to speculate on the possibility of Sir Roger de Coverley being more aphrodisiac than the Big Apple.

IV

COURTSHIP AND MATRIMONY



1

First Steps in Courtship—"The Inly Touch of Love," Some Serious Advice—Yielding to Alluring Influences—Timid Girls should tell their Mothers —"The Half-dropped Eye"

It would be out of place in these pages to grapple with a subject so large as that of love in its varied phases: a theme that must be left to poets, novelists, and moralists to dilate upon. We recognize the existence of this the most universal—the most powerful of human passions, and venture to offer our counsel to those of both sexes who, from imperfect knowledge, are naturally apprehensive that at every step they take, they may render themselves liable to misconception, ridicule, or censure.

We will take it for granted, then, that a gentleman has in one way or another become fascinated by a fair lady. His heart already feels "the inly



The most powerful of Human Passions

touch of love", and his most ardent wish is to have that love returned.

At this point we venture to give him a word of most serious advice. We urge him, before he ventures to take any step towards the pursuit of this object, to consider well his position and prospects in life, and to reflect whether they are such as to justify him in deliberately seeking to win the young lady's affections. Should he, after such a review of his affairs, feel satisfied that he can proceed honourably, he may then use fair opportunities to ascertain the estimation in which the young lady, as well as her family, is held by friends. It is perhaps needless to add, that all possible delicacy and caution must be observed in making such enquiries, so as to avoid compromising the lady herself in the slightest degree. When he has satisfied himself on this head, and found no insurmountable impediment in his way, his next endeavour will be, through the mediation of a common friend, to procure an introduction to the lady's family.

We will now reverse the picture, and see how matters stand on the fair one's side.

First let us hope that the inclination is mutual; at all events that the lady views her admirer with preference, that she deems him not unworthy of her favourable regard, and that his attentions are agreeable to her. It is true her heart may not yet be won; she has to be wooed: and what fair daughter

of Eve has not hailed with rapture that brightest day in the springtide of her life? She has probably first met the gentleman at a ball, or other festive occasion, where the excitement of the scene has reflected on every object around a roseate tint. We are to suppose of course that in looks, manner, and address, her incipient admirer is not below her ideal standard in gentlemanly attributes. His respectful approaches to her—in soliciting her hand as a partner in the dance, &c.—have first awakened on her part a slight feeling of interest, which once established, soon grows by what it feeds on. The exaltation of the whole scene favours its development, and it can hardly be wondered at if both parties leave judgment "out in the cold" while enjoying each other's company, and possibly already pleasantly occupied in building "castles in the air". Whatever may eventually come of it, the fair one is conscious for the nonce of being unusually happy. This emotion is not likely to diminish when she finds herself the object of general attention, accompanied, it may be, by the display of a little envy among rival beauties—owing to the assiduous homage of her admirer. At length, prudence whispers that he is to her, as yet, but a comparative stranger; and with a modest reserve she endeavours to retire from his observation, so as not to seem to encourage his attentions. The gentleman's ardour, however, is not to be thus checked; he again solicits her to be

his partner in a dance. She finds it hard, very hard, to refuse him; and both, yielding at last to the alluring influences by which they are surrounded, discover at the moment of parting that a new and delightful sensation has been awakened in their hearts.

At a juncture so critical in the life of a young and inexperienced woman as that when she begins to form an attachment for one of the opposite sex —at the moment when she needs the very best advice accompanied with a considerate regard for her overwrought feelings—the very best course she can take is to confide the secret of her heart to that truest and most loving of friends—her mother. Fortunate is the daughter who has not been deprived of that wisest and tenderest of counsellors—whose experience of life, whose prudence and sagacity, whose anxious care and appreciation of her child's sentiments, and whose awakened recollections of her own trysting days, qualify and entitle her above all other beings to counsel and comfort her trusting child, and to claim her confidence. Let the timid girl then pour forth into her mother's ear the flood of her pent-up feeling. Let her endeavour to distrust her own judgment, and seek hope, guidance, and support from one who, she well knows, will not deceive or mislead her. The confidence thus established will be productive of the most beneficial results—by securing the daughter's obedience to her

parent's advice, and her willing adoption of the observances prescribed by etiquette, which, as the courtship progresses, that parent will not fail to recommend as strictly essential in this phase of life. Where a young woman has had the misfortune to be deprived of her mother, she should at such a period endeavour to find her next best counsellor in some female relative, or other trustworthy friend.

We are to suppose that favourable opportunities for meeting have occurred until, by and by, both the lady and her admirer have come to regard each other with such warm feelings of inclination as to have a constant craving for each other's society. Other eyes have in the meantime not failed to notice the symptoms of a growing attachment; and some "kind friends" have, no doubt, even set them down as already engaged.

The admirer of the fair one is, indeed, so much enamoured as to be unable longer to retain his secret within his own breast; and, not being without hope that his attachment is reciprocated, resolves on seeking an introduction to the lady's family preparatory to his making a formal declaration of love.

It is possible, however, that the lover's endeavours to procure the desired introduction may fail of success. He must then discreetly adopt measures to bring himself in some degree under the fair one's notice, such, for instance, as attending the place of



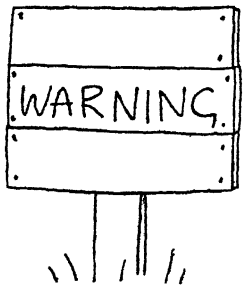
Win her with gifts if she respect not words

worship which she frequents, meeting her, so often as to be manifestly for the purpose, in the course of her promenades, &c. He will thus soon be able to judge—even without speaking to the lady—whether his further attentions will be distasteful to her. The signs of this on the lady's part, though of the most trifling nature, and in no way compromising her, will be unmistakable; for, as the poet tells us in speaking of the sex:

> He gave them but one tongue to say us "Nay",
> And two fond eyes to grant!

Should her demeanour be decidedly discouraging, any perseverance on his part would be ungentlemanly and highly indecorous. But, on the other hand, should a timid blush intimate doubt, or a gentle smile lurking in the half-dropped eye give pleasing challenge to further parley when possible, he may venture to write—not to the lady: that would be the opening of a clandestine correspondence, an unworthy course where every act should be open and straightforward, as tending to manly and honourable ends—but to the father or guardian, through the agency of a common friend where feasible; or in some instances to the party at whose residence the lady may be staying. In his letter he ought first to state his position in life and prospects, as well as mention his family connections; and then to request permission to visit the family.

By this course he in no wise compromises either himself or the lady; but leaves open to both, at any future period, an opportunity of retiring from the position of courtship taken up on the one side, and of receiving addresses on the other, without laying either party open to accusation of fickleness or jilting.



2

The Mischief of Unchecked Intercourse and Incautious Familiarity

In whatever way the attachment may have originated, we will assume that the courtship is so far in a favourable train that the lady's admirer has succeeded in obtaining an introduction to her family and that he is about to be received into their domestic circle on the footing of a welcome visitor, if not yet in the light of a probationary suitor.

In the first case, matters will in all probability be found to amble on so calmly that the enamoured pair may seldom find it needful to consult the rules of etiquette; but in the latter, its rules must be attentively observed, or "the course of true love" will assuredly not run smooth.

If the gentleman be a person of good breeding and right feeling, his conduct should be marked by a delicate respect towards the parents of his lady-love. By this means he will propitiate them in his favour and induce them to regard him as worthy of the trust they have placed in him.

Young people are naturally prone to seek the company of those they love; and as their impulses are often at such times impatient of control, etiquette prescribes cautionary rules for the purpose of averting the mischief that unchecked intercourse and incautious familiarity might give rise to. For instance, a couple known to be attached to each other should never, unless when old acquaintances, be left alone for any length of time, nor be allowed to meet in any other place than the lady's home—particularly at balls, concerts, and other public places—except in the presence of a third party. This, as a general rule, should be carefully observed, although exceptions may occasionally occur under special circumstances.



3

What Gentlewomen should watch out for during Courtship

A lady should be particular during the early days of courtship—while still retaining some clearness of mental vision—to observe the manner in which her suitor comports himself to other ladies. His habits and his conduct must awaken her vigilant attention before it be too late. Should he come to visit her at irregular hours; should he exhibit a vague or wandering attention, give proofs of a want of punctuality, show disrespect for age, sneer at things sacred, or absent himself from regular attendance at divine service, or evince an inclination to expensive pleasures beyond his means or to low and vulgar amusements; should he be foppish, eccentric, or

even slovenly in his dress; or display a frivolity of mind, and an absence of well-directed energy in his worldly pursuits: let the young lady, we say, while there is yet time, eschew that gentleman's acquaintance, and allow it gently to drop. The effort, at whatever cost to her feelings, must be made if she have any regard for her future happiness and self-respect. The proper course then to take is to intimate her distaste, and the causes that have given rise to it, to her parents or guardian.



4

What Gentlemen should watch out for—Abridged List of Gentlewomen's Vices

It would be as well also for the suitor, on his part, during the first few weeks of courtship, carefully to observe the conduct of the young lady in her own

family, and the degree of estimation in which she is held by them, as well as amongst her intimate friends. If she be attentive to her duties; respectful and affectionate to her parents; kind and forbearing to her brothers and sisters; not easily ruffled in temper; if her mind be prone to cheerfulness and to hopeful aspiration, instead of to the display of a morbid anxiety and dread of coming evil; if her pleasures and enjoyments be those which chiefly centre in home; if her words be characterized by benevolence, goodwill, charity: then we say, let him not hesitate, but hasten to enshrine such a precious gem in the casket of his affections. But if, on the other hand, he should find that he has been attracted by the tricksome affectation and heartless allurements of a flirt, ready to bestow smiles on all, but with a heart for none; if she who has succeeded for a time in fascinating him, be of uneven temper, easily provoked, and slow to be appeased; fond of showy dress, and eager for admiration; ecstatic about trifles, frivolous in her tastes, and weak and wavering in performing her duties; if her religious observances are merely the formality of lip services; if she be petulant to her friends, pert and disrespectful to her parents, overbearing to her inferiors; if pride, vanity and affectation be her characteristics; if she be inconstant in her friendship, gaudy and slovenly, rather than neat and scrupulously clean, in attire and personal

habits: then we counsel the gentleman to retire as speedily but as politely as possible from the pursuit of an object quite unworthy of his admiration and love.

But we will take it for granted that all goes well; that the parties are, on sufficient acquaintance, pleased with each other, and that the gentleman is eager to prove the sincerity of his affectionate regard by giving some substantial token of his love and homage to the fair one. This brings us to the question of



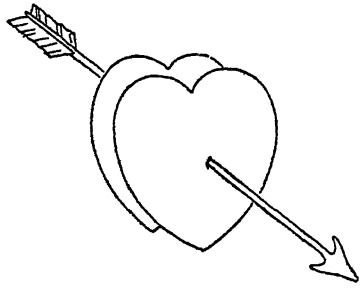
5

How to accept Presents—Avoid Impropriety

A point of which certain observances of etiquette must not be disregarded. A lady, for instance, cannot with propriety accept presents from a gentle-

man previously to his having made a proposal of marriage. She would by so doing at once incur an obligation embarrassing and unbecoming. Should, however, the gentleman insist on making her a present —as of some trifling article of jewellery, &c.—there must be no secret about it. Let the young lady take an early opportunity of saying to her admirer, in the presence of her father or mother, " I am much obliged to you for that ring (or other trinket as the case may be) which you kindly offered me the other day, and which I shall be most happy to accept, if my parents do not object," and let her say this in a manner which, while it increases the obligation, will divest it altogether of impropriety, from having been conferred under the sanction of her parents.

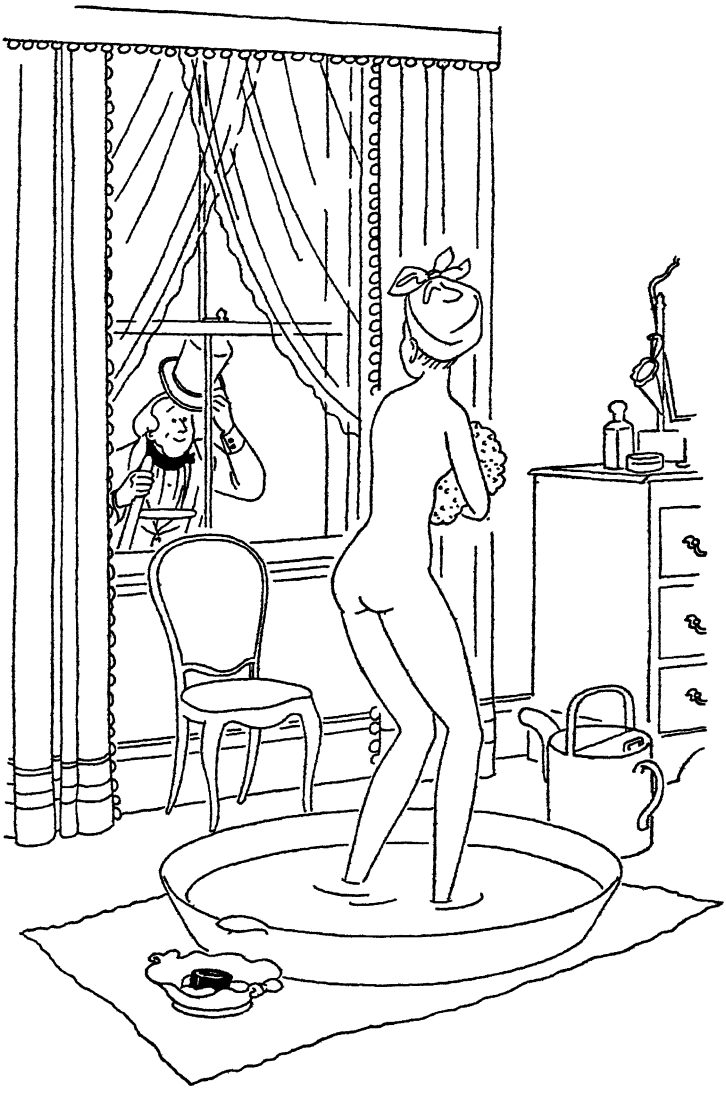
We have now reached that stage in the progress of the courtship where budding affection, having developed into mature growth, encourages the lover to make



6

The Proposal—Unloosening of the Floodgates—Prudery and Coquetry

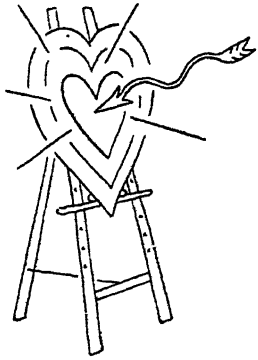
When about to take this step, the suitor's first difficulty is how to get a favourable opportunity; and next, having got the chance, how to screw his courage up to give utterance to the " declaration ". We have heard of a young lover who carried on a courtship for four months ere he could obtain a private interview with his lady-love. In the house, as might be expected, they were never left alone; and in a walk a third party always accompanied them. In such a dilemma, ought he to have unburdened his heart of its secret through the medium of a letter? We say not. A declaration in writing should certainly be avoided where the lover can by any possibility get at the lady's ear. But there are cases where this is so difficult that the impatient lover cannot be restrained from adopting the agency of a billet-doux in declaring his passion.



Let no favourable opportunity slip

The lady, before the proposal, is generally prepared for it. It is seldom that such an avowal comes without some previous indications of look and manner on the part of the admirer, which can hardly fail of being understood. She may not, indeed, consider herself engaged, and although nearly certain of the conquest she has made, may yet have her misgivings. Some gentlemen dread to ask, lest they should be refused. Many pause just at the point, and refrain from anything like ardour in their profession of attachment until they feel confident that they may be spared the mortification and ridicule that is supposed to attach to being rejected, in addition to the pain of disappointed hope. This hesitation when the mind is made up is wrong; but it does often occur, and we suppose will ever do so with persons of great timidity of character. By it both parties are kept needlessly on the fret, until the long-looked-for opportunity unexpectedly arises, when the floodgates of feeling are loosened, and the full tide of mutual affection gushes forth uncontrolled. It is, however, at this moment—the agony point to the embarrassed lover, who "doats yet doubts", whose suppressed feelings render him morbidly sensitive—that a lady should be especially careful lest any show of either prudery or coquetry on her part should lose to her for ever the object of her choice. True love is generally delicate and timid, and may easily be scared by affected indif-

ference, through feelings of wounded pride. A lover needs very little to assure him of the reciprocation of his attachment: a glance, a single pressure of the hand, a whispered syllable on the part of the loved one, will suffice to confirm his hopes.



7

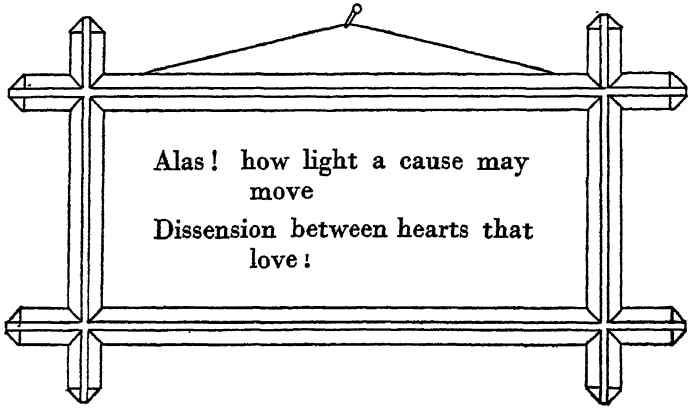
Refusal by the Young Lady

When a lady rejects the proposal of a gentleman, her behaviour should be characterized by the most delicate feeling. Therefore, if she has no love for him, she ought at least to evince a tender regard for his feelings; and in the event of her being previously engaged, should at once acquaint him with the fact. No right-minded man would desire to

persist in a suit when he well knew that the object of his admiration had already disposed of her heart.

When a gentleman makes an offer of his hand by letter, the letter must be answered, and certainly not returned, should the answer be a refusal. Under such circumstances the letter may be placed by the lady in the hands of her parents or guardians, to be dealt with by them as they may deem most advisable.

No woman of proper feeling would regard her rejection of an offer of marriage from a worthy man as a matter of triumph; her feelings on such an occasion should be of regretful sympathy with him for the pain she is unavoidably compelled to inflict. Nor should such a rejection be unaccompanied with some degree of self-examination on her part, to discern whether any lightness of demeanour or tendency to flirtation may have given rise to a false hope of her.

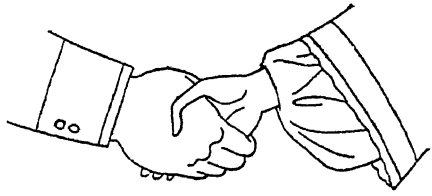


8

Conduct of the Gentleman when his Addresses are Rejected—The Use of Keen-edged but Courteous Ridicule

The conduct of the gentleman under such distressing circumstances should be characterized by extreme delicacy and a chivalrous resolve to avoid occasioning any possible annoyance or uneasiness to the fair author of his pain. If, however, he should have reason to suppose that his rejection has resulted from mere indifference to his suit, he need not altogether retire from the field, but may endeavour to kindle a feeling of regard and sympathy for the patient endurance of his disappointment, and for his continued but respectful endeavours to please the lukewarm fair one. But in the case of an avowed

or evident preference for another, it becomes imperative upon him, as a gentleman, to withdraw at once, and so relieve the lady of any obstacle that his presence or pretensions may occasion to the furtherance of her obvious wishes. A pertinacious continuance of his attentions on the part of one who has been distinctly rejected, is an insult deserving of the severest reprobation. Although the weakness of her sex, which ought to be her protection, frequently prevents a woman from forcibly breaking off an acquaintance thus annoyingly forced upon her, she rarely fails to resent such impertinence by that sharpest of woman's weapons, a keen-edged but courteous ridicule, which few men can bear up against.



9

Conduct of the Engaged Couple—Gallant and Affectionate Assiduity on the part of the Gentleman—Delicacy, Tenderness, and Confidence on Hers—Minute and Special Attentions—Indecorous Familiarity—Injudicious "Pliant Wax"—"His Reasonable Wishes"

We will now regard the pair of lovers as formally engaged, and bound together in that state of approximation to marriage which is still in some countries of Europe considered in a very sacred light, little inferior to, and, in fact, regarded as a part of, marriage itself.

The conduct of the bridegroom-elect should be marked by a gallant and affectionate assiduity towards his lady-love—a *dévouement* easily felt and understood, but not so easy to define. That of the lady towards him should manifest delicacy, tenderness, and confidence; while looking for his devotion to herself, she should not captiously take offence and show airs at his showing the same kind of attention to other ladies as she, in her turn, would

not hesitate to receive from the other sex. There is nothing so unbecoming, nor so undignified as a display of jealousy, however great the provocation. A young lady of good breeding should endeavour at all times to exercise control over the "green-eyed monster". To indulge in a display of passion on this account is quite unthinkable.

In the behaviour of the gentleman towards his betrothed in public, little difference should be perceptible from his demeanour to other ladies, except in those minute attentions which none but those who love can properly understand or appreciate.

In private, the slightest approach to indecorous familiarity must be avoided; indeed, it is pretty certain to be resented by every woman who deserves to be a bride. The lady's honour is now in her lover's hands, and he should never forget that in his demeanour to and before her.

It is the privilege of the betrothed lover, as it is also his duty, to give advice to the fair one who now implicitly confides in him. Should he detect a fault, should he observe failings, which he would wish removed or amended, let him avail himself of this season, so favourable for the frank interchange of thought between the betrothed pair, to urge their correction. He will find a ready listener; and any judicious counsel offered to her by him will now be gratefully received and remembered in after-life.



Jealousy versus *demeanour*

ON TRIVIAL POINTS OF CONDUCT MAY THEN NOT IMPROBABLY BE RESENTED BY THE WIFE AS AN UNNECESSARY INTERFERENCE : NOW, THE FAIR AND LOVING CREATURE IS DISPOSED LIKE PLIANT WAX IN HIS HANDS TO MOULD HERSELF TO HIS REASONABLE WISHES IN ALL THINGS.

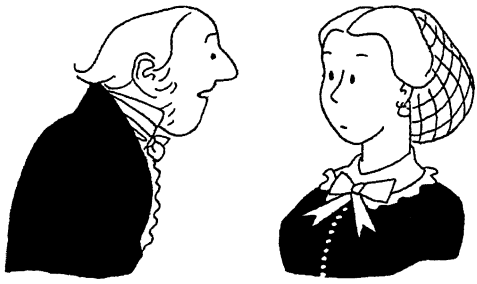


10

Conduct of the Lady during her Betrothal—Note on Unseemly Display of "Her Charms"—The Happy Moment

A lady is not expected to keep aloof from society on her engagement nor to debar herself from the customary attentions and courtesies of her male acquaintances generally; but she should, while accepting them cheerfully, maintain such a prudent reserve as to intimate that they are viewed by her as mere acts of ordinary courtesy. In all places of

public amusement for a lady to be seen with any other cavalier than her avowed lover in close attendance upon her would expose her to imputation. She will naturally take pains at such a period to observe the taste of her lover in regard to her costume and strive carefully to follow it, for all men desire to have their taste and wishes on such apparent trifles gratified. SHE SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME OBSERVE MUCH DELICACY IN REGARD TO DRESS, AND BE CAREFUL TO AVOID ANY UNSEEMLY DISPLAY OF HER CHARMS; LOVERS ARE NATURALLY JEALOUS OF OBSERVATION UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. It is a mistake not seldom made by women to suppose their suitors will be pleased by the glowing admiration expressed by other men for the object of their passion. Most lovers, on the contrary, we believe, would prefer to withdraw their prize from general observation until the happy moment for their union has arrived.



11

Conduct of the Gentleman towards the Family of his Betrothed—Embarrassing Results

The lover, having now secured his position, should use discretion and tact in his intercourse with the lady, and take care that his visits be not deemed too frequent—so as to be really inconvenient. With regard to her family, he should accommodate himself as much as possible to their habits and ways, and be ever ready and attentive to consult their wishes. Marked attention, and in most cases affectionate kindness, to the lady's mother ought to be shown; such respectful homage will secure for him many advantages in his present position. He must not exhibit an obtrusive familiarity in manner and conversation. Should a disruption of the engagement from some unexpected cause ensue, it is obvious that any such premature assumption would lead to very embarrassing results.

12

Conduct of the Lady retiring from her Engagement—Incompatible Habits and Ungentlemanly Actions —Venial Cases

Should this step unhappily be found necessary on the lady's part, the truth should be spoken, and the reasons frankly given: the case must be so put that the gentleman himself must see and acknowledge the justice of the painful decision arrived at. Incompatible habits, ungentlemanly actions, anything tending to diminish that respect for the lover which should be felt for the husband; inconstancy, ill-governed temper, all which—not to mention other obvious objections—are to be considered as sufficient reasons for terminating an engagement. The communication should be made as tenderly as possible: room may be left in mere venial cases for reformation; but all that is done must be so managed that not the slightest shadow of fickleness or want of faith may rest upon the character of the lady. It must be remembered, however, that the termination of an engagement by a lady has the privilege of passing unchallenged, a lady not being bound to declare any other reason than her will. Nevertheless, she owes it to her own reputation that her decision should rest on a sufficient foundation, and be unmistakably pronounced.



13

Conduct of the Gentleman on retiring from his Engagement—Painful Feelings

We hardly know how to approach this portion of our subject. The reasons must be strong indeed that can sufficiently justify a man, placed in the position of an accepted suitor, in severing the ties by which he has bound himself to a lady with the avowed intention of making her his wife. His reasons for breaking off his engagement must be such as will not merely satisfy his own conscience, but will justify him in the eyes of the world. If the fault be on the lady's side, great reserve and delicacy will be observed by any man of honour. If, on the other hand, the imperative force of circumstances,

such as loss of fortune, or some other unexpected calamity to himself, may be the cause, then must the reason be clearly and fully explained, in such a manner as to soothe the painful feelings which such a result must necessarily occasion to the lady and her friends. It is scarcely necessary to point out the necessity for observing great caution in all that relates to the antecedents of an engagement that has been broken off; especially the return on either side of presents and of all letters that have passed.

This last allusion brings us to the consideration of correspondence. The imperfections of education may be to some extent concealed or glossed over in conversation, but cannot fail to stand out conspicuously in a letter. An ill-written letter infallibly betrays the vulgarity and ignorance indicative of a mean social position.

But there is something more to be guarded against than bad writing and worse spelling: saying too much—writing that kind of matter which will not bear to be read by other eyes than those for which it was originally intended. That this is too frequently done is amply proved by the love letters often read in a court of law, the most affecting passages from which occasion "roars of laughter" and the derisive comments of merry-making counsel. Correspondence between lovers should at all events be tempered with discretion; and, on the lady's

side particularly, her affectionate expressions should not degenerate.

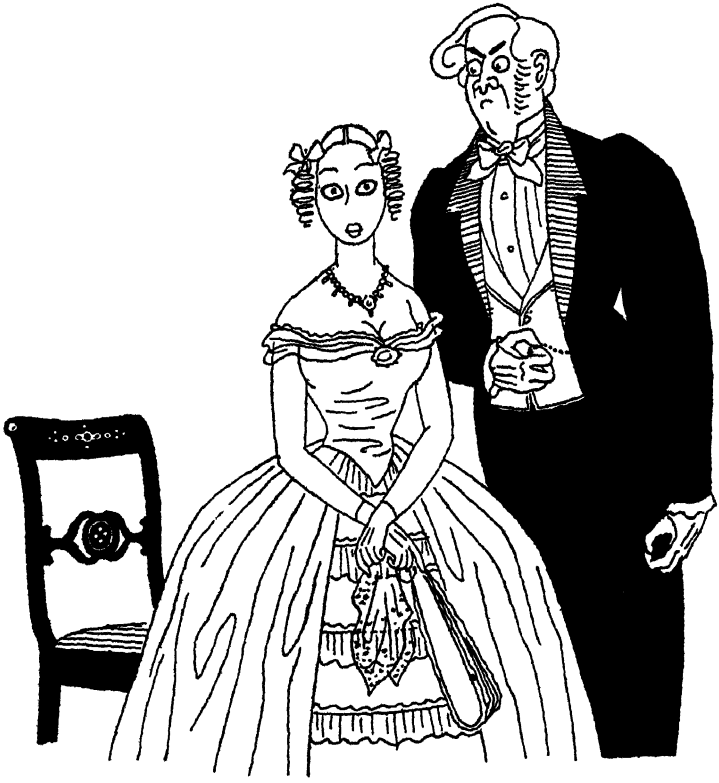
IT IS AS WELL TO REMARK HERE, THAT IN CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN A COUPLE NOT ACTUALLY ENGAGED, THE USE OF CHRISTIAN NAMES IN ADDRESSING EACH OTHER SHOULD BE AVOIDED.



14

Demeanour of the Suitor during Courtship—Self-denial—No Stint—What to wear and when

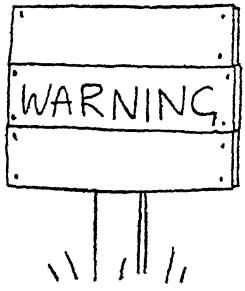
The manners of a gentleman are ever characterized by urbanity and a becoming consideration for the feelings and wishes of others, and by a readiness to practise self-denial. But the very nature of courtship requires the fullest exercise of these excellent qualities on his part. The lover should carefully accommodate his tone and bearing, whether cheerful or serious, to the mood for the time of his lady-love, whose slightest wish must be his law. In his assiduities to her he must allow of no stint; though hindered by time, distance, or fatigue, he must strive to make his professional and social duties bend to his homage at the shrine of love. All this can be done, moreover, by a man of excellent



Thrice noble is the man who of himself is king

sense with perfect propriety. Indeed, the world will not only commend him for such devoted gallantry, but will be pretty sure to censure him for any shortcoming in his performance of such *devoirs*.

It is perhaps needless to observe that at such a period a gentleman should be scrupulously neat, without appearing particular, in his attire. We shall not attempt to prescribe what he shall wear, as that must, of course, depend on the times of day when his visits are paid.



15

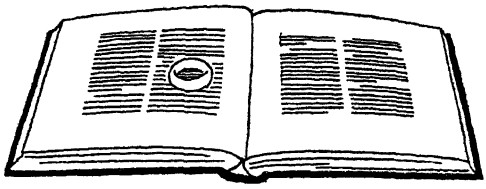
Should a Courtship be Short or Long?—Freshness Wears Off—Lukewarmness—How to make Long Engagements agreeable to the Gentleman and endurable to the Gentlewoman

The answer to this question must depend on the previous connection or relationship of the parties.

As a general rule we are disposed strongly to recommend a short courtship. It often occurs that by waiting too long the freshness of life wears off, and that the generous glow of early feelings becomes tamed down to a lukewarmness by a too prudent delaying; while a slight sacrifice of ambition or self-indulgence on the part of the gentleman, and a little descent from pride of station on the lady's side, might have ensured years of satisfied love and happy wedded life.

On the other hand, we would recommend a long courtship as advisable when it happens that the fortune of neither party will prudently allow an immediate marriage. The gentleman, we will suppose, has his way to make in his profession or business, and is desirous not to involve the object of his affection in the distressing inconvenience, if not the misery, of straitened means. He reflects that for a lady it is an actual degradation, however love may ennoble the motive of her submission, to descend from her former footing in society. For although the noble and loving spirit of a wife might enable her to bear up cheerfully against misfortune, and by her endearments soothe the broken spirit of her husband; yet the lover who would wilfully, at the outset of wedded life, expose his devoted helpmate to the ordeal of poverty, would be deservedly scouted as selfish and unworthy. These, then, are among the circumstances which warrant a lengthened

engagement, and it should be the endeavour of the lady's friends to approve such cautious delay, and to do all they can to assist the lover to abridge it. The lady's father should regard the lover in the light of another son added to his family, and spare no pains to promote his interests in life, while the lady's mother should do everything in her power, by those small attentions which a mother understands so well, to make a protracted engagement agreeable to him, and as endurable as possible to her daughter.



16

How to be Married—The Avoidance of Suddenness—A Warning

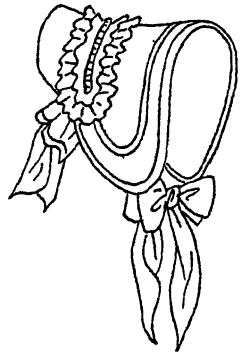
It is the lady's privilege to name the happy day.

By this time the gentleman will have made up his mind in what form to be married. He has the choice whether he will be married by BANNS, by LICENCE, by SPECIAL LICENCE, or before the Registrar,

but woe betide the unlucky wight who should venture to suggest the last method to a young lady or her parents!

For this purpose notice must be given to the clerk of the parish or of the district church. No mention of either the gentleman's or the lady's age is required. Marriage by banns, except in the country districts, is usually confined to the humbler classes of society. This is to be regretted inasmuch as it is a more deliberate and solemn declaration, and leaves the ceremony more free from the imputation of suddenness, contrivance, or fraud, than any other form.

IT IS HIGHLY TO THE CREDIT OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY, AND AN EMINENT PROOF OF THEIR DEEP RELIGIOUS FEELING, THAT ALL CLASSES OF THE COMMUNITY HAVE VIRTUALLY REPUDIATED THESE "MARRIAGES BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT"; NOR WOULD WE ADVISE ANY FAIR MAIDEN WHO HAS A REGARD TO THE COMFORT AND RESPECT OF HER AFTER CONNUBIAL LIFE, TO CONSENT TO BE MARRIED IN THE REGISTRAR'S BACK PARLOUR, AFTER DUE PROCLAMATION BY THE OVERSEERS AND POOR-LAW GUARDIANS.



17

The Bridal Trousseau and the Duty of the Bridegroom —Burning Correspondence—Severing Bachelor Connections — The Ring — Bridesmaids — Their Proper Mating with Bridegroomsmen

The day being fixed for the wedding, the bride's father now presents her with a sum of money for her trousseau, according to her rank in life.

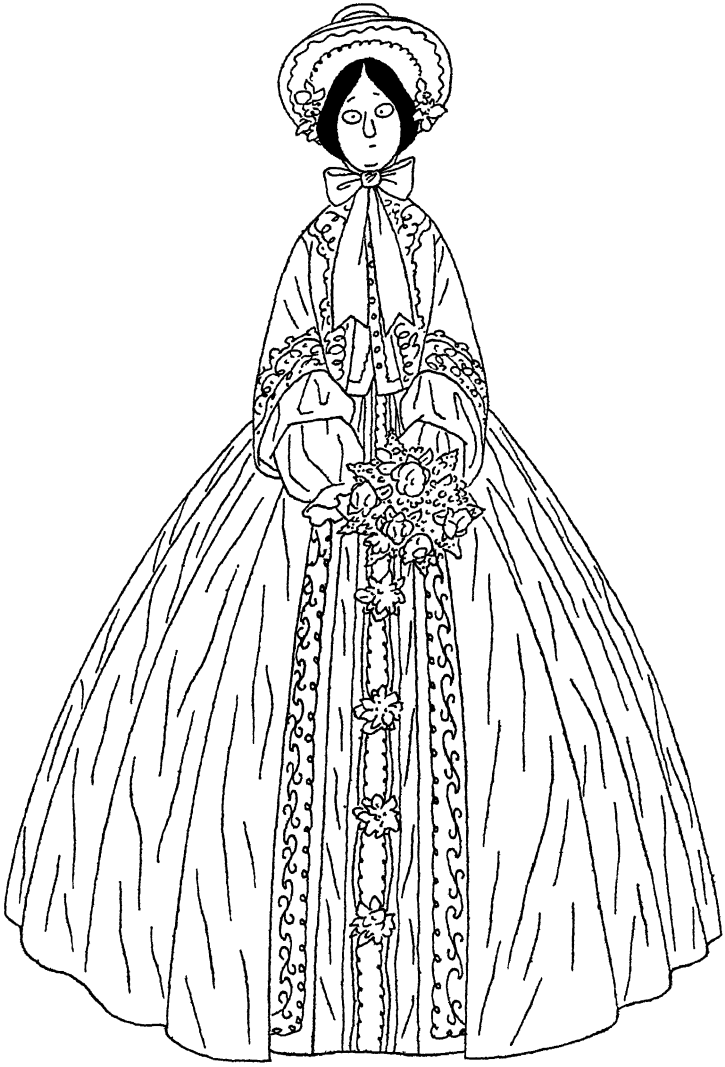
The bridegroom-elect has on the eve of matrimony no little business to transact. His first care is to look after a house suitable for his future home, and then assisted by the taste of his chosen helpmate, to take steps to furnish it in a becoming style. He must also, if engaged in business, make arrangements for a month's absence; in fact, bring together all matters into a focus, so as to be readily manageable when after the honeymoon he shall take the reins

himself. HE WILL DO WELL ALSO TO BURN MOST OF HIS BACHELOR LETTERS, AND PART WITH, IT MAY BE, SOME OF HIS BACHELOR CONNECTIONS; and he should communicate, in an easy informal way, to his acquaintances generally, the close approach of so important a change in his condition. Not to do this might hereafter lead to inconvenience and cause no little annoyance.

We must now speak of buying the ring.

It is the gentleman's business to buy the ring; and let him take especial care not to forget it; for such an awkward mistake has frequently happened. The ring should be, we need scarcely say, of the very purest gold, but substantial. There are three reasons for this: first, that it may not break—a source of great trouble to the young wife; secondly, that it may not slip off the finger without being missed—few husbands being pleased to hear that their wives have lost their wedding rings; and thirdly, that it may last out the lifetime of the loving recipient, even should that life be protracted to the extreme extent. To get at the right size required is not one of the least interesting of the delicate mysteries of love.

Having bought the ring, the bridegroom should now put it into his waistcoat pocket, there to remain until he puts on his wedding vest on the morning of the marriage; to the left-hand pocket of which he must then carefully transfer it, and not part with

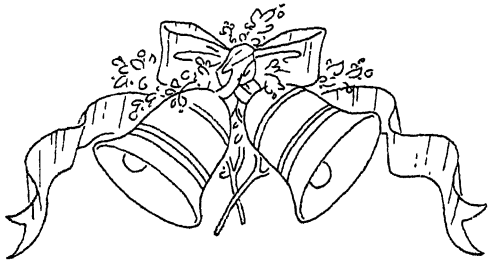


" Why am I always the bridesmaid ?
And never the blushing bride."

it until he takes it out in church during the wedding ceremony.

The bridesmaids should include the unmarried sisters of the bride; but it is considered an anomaly for an elder sister to perform this function. The pleasing novelty for several years past, of an addition to the number of bridesmaids, varying from two to eight, and sometimes more, has added greatly to the interest of weddings, the bride being thus able to diffuse a portion of her own happiness among the most intimate of her younger friends.

It behoves a bridegroom to be exceedingly particular in the selection of the friends who, as groomsmen, are to be his companions and assistants on the occasion of his wedding. Their number is limited to that of the bridesmaids: one for each. IT IS UNNECESSARY TO ADD THAT VERY MUCH OF THE SOCIAL PLEASURE OF THE DAY WILL DEPEND ON THEIR PROPER MATING. Young and unmarried they must be, handsome they should be, good-humoured they cannot fail to be, well dressed they will of course take good care to be.



18

The Wedding Day—Her Costume and His—The Words "I Will" and "Honour and Obey"—The Ring—Palpable Carelessness on the Bridegroom's Part—After the Ceremony—Wedding Favours—Wedding Breakfast

A bride's costume should be white, or some hue as close as possible to it. It is considered more stylish for a very young bride to go without a bonnet, but for her head to be covered with only a wreath of orange blossoms and a Chantilly or some other lace veil: this, however, is entirely a matter of taste; but, whether wearing a bonnet or not, the bride must always wear a veil. If a widow she may wear not only a bonnet but a coloured silk dress.

Formerly it was not considered to be in good taste for a gentleman to be married in a black coat. More latitude is now allowed in the costume of a bridegroom, the style now adopted being what is termed morning dress: a frock coat, light trousers,

white satin or silk waistcoat, ornamental tie, and white or grey gloves.

The bridesmaids dress generally in pairs, each two alike, but sometimes all wear a similar costume. Pink and light blue, with white pardessus or mantelets, or white with pink or blue, are admissible colours. The bonnet, if worn, must be white, with marabout feathers; but, of late, bonnets have usually been discarded, the bridesmaids wearing veils instead.

The bridegroom meets the bride at the altar, where he must take especial care to arrive in good time before the hour appointed.

The Words "I Will"

are to be pronounced distinctly and audibly by both parties, such being the all-important part of the ceremony as respects themselves; the public delivery, before the priest, by the father of his daughter to the bridegroom being an evidence of his assent; the silence which follows the enquiry for "cause or just impediment" testifying that of society in general; and the "I will" being the declaration of the bride and bridegroom that they are voluntary parties to their holy union in marriage.

The Words "Honour and Obey"

must also be distinctly spoken by the bride. They constitute an essential part of the obligation

and contract of matrimony on her part. It may not be amiss here to inform our fair readers that on the marriage of our gracious Sovereign Queen Victoria to H.R.H. the late lamented Prince Albert, her Majesty carefully and most judiciously emphasized these words, thereby manifesting that though a Queen in station, yet in her wedded and private life she sought no exemption from this obligation, and in this respect placed herself on the same level with the humblest village matron in her dominions.

Jeremy Taylor said it proclaims her submission, her humility, her opinion of his wisdom, his pre-eminence in the family, the right of his privilege, and the injunction imposed by God upon her sex, that although in sorrow she bring forth children, yet with love and choice she should obey. The man's authority is love, and the woman's love is obedience. It is modesty to advance and highly to honour them who have honoured us by making us the companions of their dearest excellencies; for the woman that went before the man in the way of death is commanded to follow him in the way of love; and that makes the society to be perfect, and the union profitable, and the harmony complete.

The Ring

We pity the unfortunate bridegroom who at this moment cannot, by at once inserting his hand into the corner (the one most ready to his finger and



The missing link

thumb) of his left-hand waistcoat pocket, pull out the wedding ring. Imagine his dismay at not finding it there!—the first surprise, the growing anxiety, as the right-hand pocket is next rummaged —the blank look, as he follows this by the discovery that his nether garments have no pockets whatsoever, not even a watch fob, where it may lie perdue in a corner! Amid the suppressed giggle of the bridesmaids, the disconcerted look of the bride herself, at such a palpable instance of carelessness on the part of the bridegroom thus publicly displayed before all her friends, and the half-repressed disapprobation of the numerous circle around, he fumbles in the coat-pockets and turns them inside-out. A further and useless search causes increased confusion and general annoyance; at length it becomes evident that the unfortunate ring has been forgotten! We may observe, however, that in default of the ring, the wedding ring of the mother may be used. The application of the key of the church door is traditional in this absurd dilemma; and in country churches a straw twisted into a circle has been known to supply the place of the orthodox hoop of gold!

After the Ceremony

The clergyman usually shakes hands with the bride and bridegroom and the bride's father and mother, and a general congratulation ensues.

The clergyman of the church is invariably invited to attend, although the ceremony may be performed by some clerical friend of the bride or bridegroom. This is called "assisting". It should not be forgotten that the presence of an "assisting clergyman" entails the doubling of the fees.

The husband signs first in the Vestry; then the bride-wife, for the last time in her maiden name; next the father of the bride, and the mother, if present; then the father and mother of the bridegroom, if present; next the bridesmaids and the bridegroomsmen; then such of the rest of the company as may desire to be on the record as witnesses. All the names must be signed in full. The certificate of the marriage is then handed to the bride, and SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PRESERVED IN HER OWN POSSESSION.

The Wedding Favours

Meanwhile, outside the church, as soon as the ceremony is completed and not before—for it is regarded as unfortunate—a box of the wedding favours is opened, and every servant-in-waiting takes care to pin one on the right side of his hat, while the coachmen, too, ornament therewith the ears of their horses. Inside the church the wedding favours are also distributed, and a gay, gallant, and animated scene ensues, as each bridesmaid pins on the coat of each bridegroomsman a wedding favour,

which he returns by also pinning one on her shoulder. Every "favour" is carefully furnished with two pins for this purpose; and it is amazing to see the flutter, the coquettish smiling, and the frequent pricking of fingers, which the performance of this piquant and pleasant duty of the wedding bachelors and ladies "in waiting" does occasion!

The Return Home

The bridegroom now leads the bride out of the church, and the happy pair return homeward in the first carriage. The father and mother follow in the next. The rest "stand not on the order of their going".

The Wedding Breakfast

The bride and bridegroom sit together at the centre of the table, in front of the wedding cake. The health of the bride's parents is then proposed and is followed by those of the principal personages present, the toast of the bridesmaids being generally one of the pleasantest features of the festal ceremony. After about two hours, the principal bridesmaid leads the bride out of the room as quietly as possible, so as not to disturb the party or attract attention. Shortly after—it may be in about ten minutes—the absence of the bride being noticed, the rest of the ladies retire. Then it is that the bridegroom has a few melancholy moments to bid adieu

to his bachelor friends and he then generally receives some hints on the subject in a short address from one of them, to which he is of course expected to respond. He then withdraws for a few minutes, and returns after having made a slight addition to his toilet, in readiness for travelling.

In some recent fashionable weddings we have noticed that the bride and bridegroom do not attend the wedding breakfast, but after a slight refreshment in a private apartment, take their departure immediately after the wedding tour. But this defalcation, if we may so call it, of the chief dramatis personæ of the day, though considered to be in good taste, is by no means a popular innovation, but is rather regarded as a prudish dereliction from the ancient forms of hospitality, which are more prized than ever on so genial an occasion as marriage.



19

The Honeymoon—A Few Gentle Tears—A Short Cough

The young bride, divested of her bridal attire, and quietly costumed for her journey, now bids farewell to her bridesmaids and lady friends. A few tears spring to her gentle eyes as she takes a last look at the home she is now leaving. The servants venture to crowd around her with their humble but heartfelt congratulations; finally, she falls weeping on her mother's bosom. A short cough is heard, as of someone summoning up enough resolution to hide an emotion. It is her father. He dares not trust his voice; but holds out his hand, gives her an affectionate kiss, and then leads her, half turning back, down the stairs and through the hall to the door, where he delivers her as a precious charge to her husband, who hands her quickly into the carriage, springs in after her, waves his hand to the party who appear crowding at the windows, half smiles at the throng about the door, then, amidst a shower of old slippers—missiles of good luck, sent flying after the happy pair—gives



" A-hem ! "

the word and they are off, and started on the long-hoped-for voyage.

20

Etiquette after the Wedding—Practical Advice to a Newly-married Couple—No Concealments—Little Love—Begotten Attentions

The dress of the bride during the honeymoon should be characterized by modesty, an attractive simplicity, and scrupulous neatness. The slightest approach to slatternliness in costume, when all should be exquisitely trim from chevelure to chaussure, would be an abomination, and assuredly beget a most unpleasant impression on the susceptible feelings of the husband. He will naturally regard any carelessness or indifference in this respect, at such a time, as a bad augury for the future.

Our advice to the husband will be brief. Let him have no concealments from his wife. Many a kind husband almost breaks his kind wife's heart by an alteration in his manner, which she cannot but detect, but from ignorance of the cause very probably attributes to a wrong motive. Let no man think lightly of the opinion of his wife in times of difficulty. Woman have generally more acuteness of perception than man; and in moments of peril,

or in circumstances that involve a crisis or turning-point in life, they have usually more resolution and greater instinctive judgment.

A wife should also receive a stated allowance for dress, within which limit she ought always to restrict her expenses. Any excess of expenditure under this head should be left to the considerate kindness of her husband to concede. Nothing is more contemptible than for a woman to have perpetually to ask her husband for small sums for house-keeping expenses—nothing more annoying and humiliating than to have to apply to him always for money for her own private use—nothing more disgusting than to see a man "mollycoddling" about marketing, and rummaging about for cheap articles of all kinds.

Let the husbands beware, when things go wrong with him in business affairs, of venting his bitter feelings of disappointment and despair in the presence of his wife and family—feelings which, while abroad, he finds it practicable to restrain. It is as unjust as it is impolite to indulge in such a habit.

A wife having married the man she loves above all others, must be expected in her turn to pay some court to him. Before marriage she has, doubtless, been made his idol. Every moment he could spare, and perhaps many more than he could properly appropriate, have been devoted to her. How anxiously has he not revolved in his mind his

worldly chances of making her happy! How often has he not had to reflect, before he made the proposal of marriage, whether he should be acting dishonourably towards her by incurring the risk, for the selfish motive of his own gratification, of placing her in a worse position than the one she occupied at home! And still more than this, he must have had to consider with anxiety the probability of having to provide for an increasing family, with all its concomitant expenses.

We say, then, that being married, and the honeymoon over, the husband must necessarily return to his usual occupations, which will in all probability engage the greater part of his thoughts, for he will now be desirous to have it in his power to procure various little indulgences for his wife's sake, which he never would have dreamed of for his own. He comes to his home weary and fatigued; his young wife has had but her pleasures to gratify, while he has been toiling through the day to enable her to gratify these pleasures. Let then, the dear, tired husband, at the close of his daily labours, be made welcome by the endearments of his loving spouse—let him be from the cares of having to satisfy the caprices of a petted wife. Let her now take her turn in paying those many little love-begotten attentions which married men look for to soothe them—let her reciprocate that devotion to herself, which from the early hours of their love, he cherished

for her, by her ever-ready endeavours to make him happy and his home attractive.

In the presence of other persons, however, married people should refrain from fulsome expression of endearment to each other, the use of which, although a common practice, is really a mark of bad taste.

A married woman should always be very careful how she receives personal compliments. She should never court them, nor ever feel flattered by them, whether in her husband's presence or not. If in his presence, they can hardly fail to be distasteful to him; if in his absence, a lady, by a dignified demeanour, may always convince an assiduous admirer that his attentions are not well received, and at once for ever stop all familiar advances. In case of insult, a wife should immediately make her husband acquainted therewith; as the only chance of safety to a villain lies in the concealment of such things by a lady from dread of consequences to her husband. From that moment he has her at advantage, and may very likely work on deliberately to the undermining of her character. He is thus enabled to play upon her fears, and taunt her with their mutual secret and its concealment, until she may be involved, guilelessly, in a web of apparent guilt, from which she can never extricate herself without risking the happiness of her future life.

Not the least useful piece of advice—homely though it be—that we can offer to newly-married

ladies, is to remind them that husbands are men and that men must eat. We can tell them, moreover, that men attach no small importance to this very essential operation, and that a very effectual way to keep them in a good humour, as well as good condition, is for wives to study their husbands' peculiar likes and dislikes in this matter.

Servants are difficult. The art lies in a steady command and management of yourself as well as them. The well-known Dr. Clark, who was always well served, used to say, "It is so extremely difficult to get good servants, that we should not lightly give them up when even tolerable. My advice is, bear a little with them, and do not be too sharp; pass by little things with gentle reprehensions; now and then a little serious advice does far more good than sudden fault-finding when the offence justly occurs. If my wife had not acted in this way, we must have been continually changing, and nothing can be more disagreeable in a family, and, indeed, it is generally disgraceful."

An observance of the few following rules will in all probability ensure a life of domestic harmony, peace, and comfort:

To hear as little as possible whatever is to the prejudice of others; to believe nothing of the kind until you are compelled to admit the truth of it; never to take part in the circulation of evil report and idle gossip, always to moderate, as far as possible,

harsh and unkind expressions reflecting upon others; always to believe that if the other side were heard a very different account might be given of the matter.

In conclusion, we say emphatically to the newly-wedded wife, that attention to these practical hints will prolong her honeymoon throughout the whole period of wedded life, and cause her husband, as each year adds to the sum of his happiness, to bless the day when he first chose her as the nucleus round which he might consolidate the inestimable blessings of HOME.



Matrimony

The preceding chapter deals with a very serious subject and deserves the most serious consideration. Marriage for the Victorian was likely to involve the creation and establishment of a large family. Its contemplation therefore was not light-hearted. Cobbett suggested in his advice to young men that they should make sure before proposing that the young woman under consideration washed behind the ears. Dr. Arnold and Coventry Patmore both are reputed to have sent their betrothed what practically amounted to a questionnaire or examination paper, interrogating them in detail as to their religious and literary views. But Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone (who had embarked on marriage in an equally serious spirit) used to stand on the hearth-rug arm in arm, singing comic songs and occasionally breaking into jigs. A sublime confidence existed between man and wife which even survived Mrs. Gladstone's habit of breaking up an egg in sherry for his sustenence throughout important debates in the House of Commons.

Marriage in the United States of America and elsewhere is frequently undertaken to-day in a less serious spirit. The publicity value of the proposed union indeed often assumes paramount importance. Unlike

their predecessors in the more leisured Victorian age, couples seek not so much to marry each other as to be married—and the more bizarre the jumping off place the better. Couples marry in submarines, in airships, in the Death Houses of Jails. Were a questionnaire to be prepared nowadays, it might contain such questions as (a) Do you know how to avoid the creation of a family? (b) Can you cook things in tins? and (c) Can you cope with hangovers? But sanity and families will keep breaking through . . .

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